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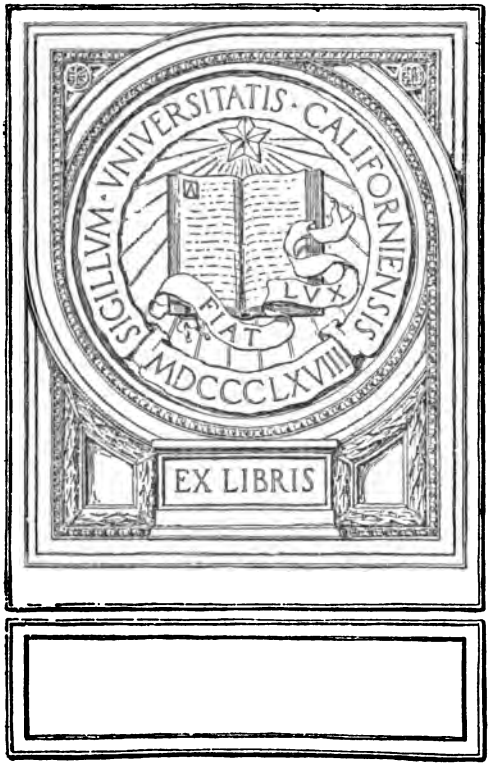
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WATSON PASHA

COL. SIR CHARLES MOORE WATSON

Frontispiece

WATSON PASHA

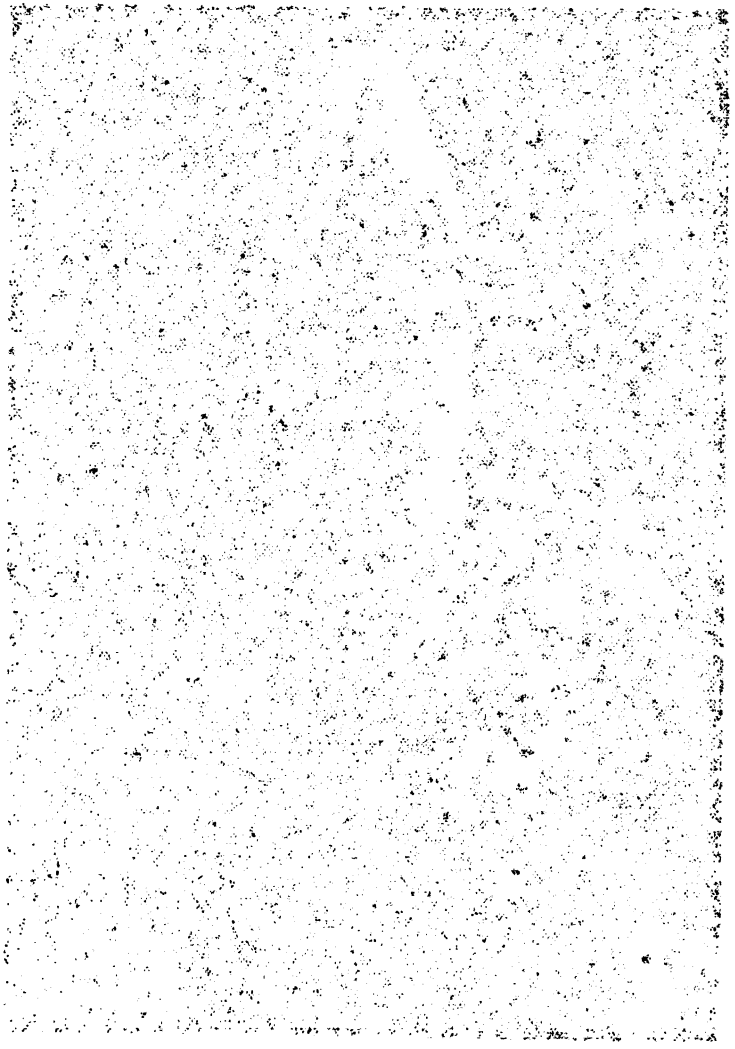
A RECORD OF THE [illegible] OF
SIR CHARLES MOORE WATSON
K.C.M.G., C.S.I.,
COLONEL IN THE ROYAL ENGINEERS

BY

STANLEY LANE-POOLE, LITT.D.

WITH TWO PORTRAITS

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET
1919



WATSON PASHA

A RECORD OF THE LIFE-WORK OF
SIR CHARLES MOORE WATSON,
K.C.M.G., C.B., M.A.,
COLONEL IN THE ROYAL ENGINEERS

BY

STANLEY LANE-POOLE, LITT.D.

WITH TWO PORTRAITS

UNIV. OF
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GRAND PRIOR OF THE ORDER OF THE HOSPITAL OF
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PREFACE

I owe so many thanks to Sir Charles Watson's friends, whose names appear in this book, that to enumerate them is needless. But I must record my very special debt to Mr. Walter W. Skeat, M.A., late F.M.S.C.S. When I was compelled by circumstances to abandon for a time the completion of this Memoir, Mr. Skeat came to my assistance, and, working with great skill and much labour on the material with which I and Lady Watson, who has been an invaluable helper, supplied him, he wrote most of the later chapters of this book. I cannot sufficiently express my gratitude to him for his most valuable work.

I must add that the spelling of Oriental names in these chapters is not always consistent, because I have often followed the manuscripts without alteration.

S. L.-P.

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WATSON PASHA

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

A LITTLE over thirty years ago I met Watson Pasha for the first time. We happened to be staying at the same hotel in Constantinople, but became known to each other through the hospitality of Sir Lintorn Simmons, then Governor of Malta, who was reviving the memories of Crimean days yet thirty years earlier. My cousin, A. G. Chesney, was then his aide-de-camp, just as Watson had been a few years before when Simmons was Inspector-General of Fortifications at the War Office, and the younger aide was my bridge of acquaintance with the elder.

Watson was then forty-two, a Major in the Corps of Royal Engineers, but lately a General and Pasha in the Egyptian Army. To talk with him no one could have guessed that he had just come through a disagreeable experience which led to his resignation of the critical post of Governor-General of the Red Sea Littoral, in which he was succeeded by his brother-sapper, the afterwards famous Lord Kitchener. Happy in meeting Sir Lintorn—doubly his Chief, for he had commanded the Royal Engineer Establishment at Chatham in 1866-1868 when Watson was a subaltern—keenly interested in everything about the Bosporus, and indefatigable in finding out all that

was worth knowing—for he had an insatiably enquiring mind—his handsome looks, alert intelligence, and charm of manner and conversation—" la physiognomie si vive, la parole si enjouée," as a French friend said of him—distinguished him among the most distinguished, and one felt that here was a personality possibly unique.

I happened to obtain through our Ambassador an order from the Sultan which permitted me to view the Imperial Treasury in the old Seraglio, then a much rarer privilege than in later times. The *iradé* was made out for " His Excellency " (only once have I enjoyed this brevet rank!) and " Her Excellency and suite," and thus opened the way for me to invite my friends. Watson gaily accepted the rôle of my Military Attaché, Mrs. Watson consented to pose for the occasion as " Her Excellency," and I collected half a dozen student interpreters from Ortaköi to represent my " suite." We were short of uniforms, and our top-hats and frock-coats made a poor show compared with the gorgeous panoply of the Sultan's equerry, a Colonel in superb uniform, who rode beside our carriage all the way to Eski Serai. We saw the treasures, and amazingly rich and barbaric they were—one questions, Where are they now?—and we had coffee in the beautiful " Baghdad " kiosk, attended by some forty obsequious effendis on the scent for bakhsheesh; and then we drove back in triumph to Pera, with the Embassy kavass, a resplendent image, on the box-seat.

The friendship thus begun in 1886 was renewed and strengthened year by year, for we seldom lost sight of each other for long; and the more one saw of the Pasha, the better one appreciated him. The last time I saw him was in January, 1916. He was then as eager and interested as ever, and it was difficult to realize that he was in his seventy-second year; nor

could I have imagined that in less than three months I should be honoured with the duty of rendering the last service I can do for my friend by telling the story of his life's work. It is not an easy service; not because his career was not full of interesting and sometimes momentous activities, and offered, perhaps, more variety of occupation than often falls to the lot of even the usually versatile Royal Engineer, but because he was reserved in an unusual and very tantalizing degree, and hated talking about himself. One had to discover him in the course of many talks, and even then he could not be brought to reveal the inner life which constitutes the real man. It is a mistake to think that an Irishman's ready talk does not cover a vast reserve. He was just as reserved in his letters as in his conversation, and whilst reading his papers for the purpose of this book I have found myself continually praying, almost always in vain, that he would "let himself go." He himself would say, "It doesn't matter to other people what I think or believe—the only important thing, if 'important' is the word, is what I did; so please leave my inside alone and look only at my work." Still, there are hints of self-revelation here and there, and we shall not have to do with a mere mechanism. The recollections of friends, too, have helped to suggest some contrasted sides of his character.

For the record of his work—the only thing he would think worth relating—the materials are ample, and carefully preserved. The Pasha—we always called him by his Egyptian title—had the characteristically methodical mind of the Royal Engineer, and kept and arranged his papers with extraordinary precision. They lie before me in a series of drawers, labelled, dated, docketed, and ranging from accounts of his family, reports of his examinations, official despatches, private correspondence on all subjects

connected with his career and with innumerable interests outside it, down to the last article he wrote and the letters about its publication in the very month of his death. There is probably nothing concerning his work that is not revealed in these systematically ordered papers; and this is saying much, for Watson's energies were almost inexhaustible. He did not know how to be idle, and the record of his life is a catalogue of continuous intellectual movement. When there was no work to be done, he made work for himself, and no fatigue seems to have induced him to rest. I remember an evening in his former house at Thurloe Square when there were several distinguished people to dinner, talking chiefly in French. One would think that three hours of incessant talk would be followed by a quiet rest, aided by his favourite Egyptian cigarette; but when I looked for him in his study near midnight, I found him at a large table with wide sheets of paper covered with figures before him. He was refreshing himself by calculating the "wobbling" or "second rotation" of the earth's axis in space! Even when he was enjoying his chief relaxation, travelling with his wife all over Europe and the lands bordering the Mediterranean, he was not content merely to see and admire: he must work at something and discover all that could be known about the architecture, language, and history, of the places they visited.

It might be supposed that the very diversity of his occupations argued a lack of purpose, a want of definite object in life; but this would be to misread his character. There was no lack of determination about Watson; still less a want of will-power. He made up his mind quickly, and stuck to his resolve with what his opponents termed obstinacy. But his purpose was simple and disinterested. From early years he made it his rule never to ask for any-

thing and never to decline a task. If the duty laid upon him was not what he would have chosen and took him out of his own line, he nevertheless accepted it and did his best with it. Hence the disconnection of his various services was not his own doing. He went where he was sent and bore with patience and equanimity the interruption of a course of research in which he excelled, in order to take up quite another kind of work. Thus we find him at one time conducting experiments in submarine mining and inventing improvements in what were then called 'torpedoes," only to leave others to complete what he had begun, whilst he was turned on to the equipment of military balloons, or was called away to the Sudan by General Gordon, or again to Egypt to put the seal on the taking of Cairo by his brilliant capture of the Citadel.

Yet, while sent hither and thither on various duties, there was one sheet-anchor that held him fast. No offer, however tempting, could induce him to sever his connection with the Corps. Others might drop the R.E. and accept lucrative civil posts, but Watson remained a loyal Royal Engineer Officer to the end of his career. Anything that injured the Corps roused his indignation, and in his last years there were many changes that cut the loyal sapper to the quick.

It is a curious and well-authenticated fact that when only a child of four years old he solemnly announced his intention to become a Royal Engineer. None of his family had belonged to the famous Corps, and no one seems to know why he made this precocious choice. Family history interests no one but members of the family, and it is enough to say that the Watsons had been capable men of business in Dublin since Francis Watson, tracing a descent from people settled at Bengeworth, near Evesham, in Worcestershire, came over from London to Dublin in the early

part of the eighteenth century, took a house in Capel Street—then occupied by good families, though now by shops—and became successively Warden and Master (1743) of the Guild of Saddlers. His son William in 1751 obtained "scholarship," a high distinction, at Trinity College, and Watson's father and the Pasha himself also graduated in the University of Dublin. There was thus a mixed tradition of business and scholarship, which had its effect. William Watson, the father, was a man of undoubted aptitudes, well known as Chairman of the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company, the interests of which, especially as holders of the Government mail contract, he defended with vigour and success. His management of the Company was so able that he was offered, I believe, and declined the chairmanship of the Cunard Line. It was remarked of him that "he was an example of a man who, beginning life without any special interest or influential friends, formed by an unwavering course of industry and integrity a prominent position of extreme usefulness and singular repute."* The like may be said of the son.

A busy man, often absent from home on the affairs of the Company, the father had much less to do with the bringing up of his children than their mother. She was Sarah, daughter of the Rev. Moore Morgan, Prebendary (like Swift) of Dunlavin in county Wicklow, and sister of the Dean of Waterford, descended from a Welsh family long settled at Llantarnam, near Caerleon, Monmouth. She was not strong, and could not go much into general society, but she had all the old, fast dwindling Irish spirit of hospitality, and she devoted herself to making home delightful to her children. There were six of them, two daughters and four sons; Charles Moore Watson was

* Proceedings of Institute of Civil Engineers, lxxv., pt. 1.

the third child and second son, born at 25, Fitz-William Place, Dublin, on July 10, 1844. His mother was fortunately not only a very intelligent woman, but shared the love of solid reading, which was commoner in Ireland in the middle of the last century than it is at present. The habit of reading aloud in the long evenings, when dinner was much earlier than now, kept the children together and, kindling a common interest in the same subject, helped to maintain that intense feeling of family union which was one of the dominant influences in Charles's subsequent career.

The home-life was singularly happy, cultivated, and free from irritating control. The children enjoyed unusual liberty under the wise mother. They were all brought up together till they were almost grown up, getting instruction somewhat casually from visiting tutors, and rarely attending school. Indeed, Charles only went to a Dublin day-school for a year, and his education rested more upon his mother's cultivated taste and his own passion for books of every kind, on which he browsed as he pleased, than upon any settled system of instruction. He showed very early that alert mind which led his mother to call him her "bright boy." "I would not like to lose that name," he told her when he was twenty-one, and he signed his letters with it when he was a mature man of forty. It was a beautiful thing to see him and his brothers, as grown men, waiting devotedly on their mother and deferring in reverence to her insight and experience. We shall not be far wrong if we ascribe to her influence much of the personal charm and intellectual vitality which were specially characteristic of her second son. He always looked back upon his childhood as the happiest—or, to use his too favourite adjective, "pleasantest"—possible. Writing to her from Woolwich, he says: "There are

so many places I remember being at with you, I really sometimes feel I would give anything to have that time back again: I was so awfully happy. Whatever anyone may say, I don't believe that children are not the pleasantest, though, of course, they are made sorry about smaller things." And again: "Certainly, if anyone was happy, I have always been so, particularly when at home with you all." The beloved home on which he began life retained its sacred influence long after he had left it, and helped to make him the cheerful, optimistic man he was, even in the worst weeks of the Boer War or the retreat from Mons. He never despaired, but consistently maintained his doctrine that things would "come out all right."

To his early life at home, too, he doubtless owed in some degree the quietly religious spirit his mother's example inspired. Though he never talked of such things, his letters and his acts all point to a quiet trust in the purpose of God, always provided one "does one's duty." I do not intend to dwell on what Watson himself deliberately veiled, but it must be said that, whilst brought up in a circle of what we in England should call ultra-Protestants, he was never a bigot. He continued to be a Protestant and a Unionist to the end, and was proud of his Dublin birth and of the soft accent of the well-bred, which he never lost or tried to lose. He was proud to be an Irishman, and had all the Irishman's pride. I have heard him called a "rebel," but this meant only that he had the Irishman's dislike of most party governments and the Irishman's love of argument for argument's sake; not that he had the smallest sympathy for "Nationalism" or rebellion. He had, indeed, no admiration for the haphazard opportunist policies of English Cabinets, but from his youth up he was convinced that the Irish had chiefly themselves to thank for the

kind of government they got—and deserved. Writing from Woolwich in 1865 to his elder sister, he says: "I wonder will Ireland ever be like other countries, and be able to get on in the world without abusing other people; as if everything that happened to it was not the fault of the Irish themselves." In this opinion he never changed; Ireland was perhaps the only subject on which his optimism failed him.

In one respect this happy life at home had its drawback. It made him almost indifferent to outside friendships. Family affection satisfied him, and he did not yearn for other friends. This, I think, was characteristic of him throughout his life. He had more difficulty than most men in making intimates, partly by reason of his inveterate reserve, but largely because he did not feel the need of them, since he had at first his family, and later his wife, who shared all his interests and made his home far more attractive to him than any other place on earth. Many friends attached themselves to him as the years went on, but it always appeared—with a few privileged exceptions—to be a case of "l'un qui baise et l'autre qui tend la joue." His really intimate friends were few; his devoted admirers, men and women, many. He kept most of them at arm's length, and nothing was more characteristic of him than this attitude of interested, kindly, but rather critical, aloofness. His never going to a Public School or sharing the common residential life of a University confirmed this attitude, by precluding those ardent school and college friendships to which most of us owe very much. It is true he did go to Trinity College, Dublin, and always took a special pride in adding M.A. to the many letters that his distinguished career affixed to his name. He entered Trinity College, Dublin, in July, 1861, at the age of seventeen, and was placed in the first division with entrance honours in French and German—

modern languages had always been a strong point in the home training—and he took first honours in mathematics at the three term examinations in 1862. But he did not live in Trinity, and thus missed the intimacies of college life; while the system, permitted in Dublin University, of keeping terms by examinations in place of residence enabled him to take his Bachelor's degree (February, 1866; M.A., June, 1869) whilst a cadet at Woolwich, merely running over to Dublin for the examinations. Most of his time, moreover, during the two years he was a student of Trinity College, Dublin, was absorbed in preparation for Woolwich, under the tuition of a good "grinder" or army "coach"—a tuition which was so thorough, or perhaps it should rather be said which met with so brilliant a response in the pupil, that Watson took first place at the entrance examination at the Royal Military Academy in July, 1863.

Something, no doubt, was lost by this lack of the full experience of corporate life in school and University, but probably more was gained in the building up of character. A joyous and reverent home-life armoured the young cadet for the battle of life with weapons that are not always forged in colleges. A devoted son and brother, he went forth with clean mind and wholesome life, inspired by sound influences and dominated by a stern sense of duty, to find his place in the world.

CHAPTER II

WOOLWICH AND CHATHAM

(1863-1868)

THE salient facts in Watson's career as a cadet at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, are that he entered at the top of the 138 competitors for the 34 cadetships; that he kept his place as first in every term examination, and he came out first in the final examination in December, 1865, with a total of 29,715 marks, for which he received the Pollock Gold Medal, awarded to " the most distinguished cadet," at the hands of Sir George Pollock himself. Jekyll (now Sir Herbert), who was over two thousand marks below Watson, got the sword of honour, awarded for " exemplary conduct," although Watson was what was termed " senior responsible," and had never got into any scrape or been placed under arrest during the whole of his cadetship. This excited some comment among people who did not know the rules, and the Governor wrote to Mr. William Watson to explain that his son was entitled to the sword as well as the medal, but that " it had been decided that the same cadet should not get both if the second had also done well."* Watson was also awarded first prizes for artillery, fortifications, photography, and geology. It is a brilliant record, and needs no comment.

* See Sir C. M. Watson's chapter on " The Story of a Batch, 1863-1865," in Captain Guggisburg's entertaining story of the Royal Military Academy, entitled " The Shop " (Cassell and Co., 1900), to which the present chapter is indebted.

What we wish to know is something of the general life of a cadet in the sixties, and the part Watson played in it. We have his own memories, less reticent than usual, recorded in Captain Guggisburg's "The Shop," and letters to his family add a little to the picture. The course in those days lasted over five terms, or two years and a half. The day began at 6.15 with "defaulters' parade," breakfast at 7 in summer and 8 in winter; and after prayers, known then as "Ow-wow stuff," from the mumbling pronunciation of the Chaplain, came first-study parade, when the cadets fell in by classes and were marched to the class-rooms by the corporals on duty. "Academy" lasted till 11, followed by drill, and dinner parade at 1. Academy was resumed from 2 till 4, and then "we were free till 6, and hungry cadets could have lunch of bread and cheese and beer in the dining-hall. Third-study parade was at 6, and work went on for two hours. Then came tea parade at 8; after that we could do as we liked till 10.30 p.m., when all lights were put out." The food, Watson says, was plain, but good and plentiful. Fires were allowed in the bedrooms, but there was no hot water in the baths, and cadets sometimes enjoyed the healthy experience of breaking the ice before they could get in. If they shirked their bath they were liable to be ducked in uniform. At first the cadets were four in a room, but on entering his second year he had a bedroom to himself. It was then that he began higher mathematics under the most brilliant mathematician, perhaps, of his day, Professor Sylvester, whose genius, however, was not equalled by his power of teaching or keeping order, and the cadets naturally took advantage of his abstraction.

"One plan was for a large number of them to drop down behind their desks. Sylvester would suddenly awake from the solution of some abstruse problem

and see the class-room half empty. This made him rush up and down, a movement which had been prepared for by sprinkling the floor round his table with wax matches, which went off in succession as he stamped round, driving him quite wild. Another trick was to fill his ink-bottle with chalk, which clogged his pens and made him mad. But with all his little ways he could teach well if he was allowed his own method, and personally I owe a great deal to him."*

October, 1864, began with the huge explosion at the Erith Powder Magazine, which shook the Academy; and on the following day the Academy was rumbling with a moral earthquake of its own.

"The first symptom was a disturbance in the class-room where Professor Sylvester presided. The corporal on duty failed to quell it, and the assistant-inspector of studies had to be called in. Then followed a row of which I have forgotten the particulars, and which ended in the rustication of two cadets. A little later in the month came Charlton Fair, against attending which there were very strict orders. Two cadets were seen by an Officer at the fair, and placed under arrest on their return to barracks. After due investigation of the case, they were added to the rusticated, and when the order was read out on parade it was received with a loud murmur. This, of course, was a very serious military offence, and in consequence one class was placed in arrest, and all the other cadets were confined to barracks. This was regarded as an unfair proceeding, as it punished the innocent as well as the guilty.

"That night the disturbance culminated. One of the field-guns on the parade was fired towards the Governor's house, and all the swords which the cadets carried during punishment drill were thrown into the reservoir. One of the two cadets who had been rusticated, but had not yet been sent away, left his barrack-room and, jumping over the ditch, made his escape. He was pursued by two of the drill-

* Watson in Guggisburg's "The Shop," pp. 106-107.

serjeants who jumped into the ditch after him and then grappled together, each thinking the other was the delinquent cadet. The latter in the meantime got away."

A Board of Inquiry was sent down from London, and immediately and very sensibly removed the ban of confinement to barracks; but the causes of the uproar, which seemed to be mainly commemorative of the big mutiny of 1861, were not discovered. "I really don't think there were any valid ones," wrote Watson, "and can only suppose that it was due to a bacillus of unrest which developed itself about once in two years, generally in October." A cadet was sent away for good, others rusticated, and some corporals reduced to the ranks, with the disagreeable result for Watson, who had not shared in the tumult, that he was made a corporal and had to relinquish his comfortable separate room to take charge of a four-room in the front barracks. It meant more duty and less spare time. His steady conduct led to his appointment in January, 1865, as "responsible under-officer" of B division; but things had fortunately quieted down, and the cadets gave him little trouble. In fact, the only official act he records of this period is his unsuccessful attempt to induce the authorities to permit smoking in moderation, and not to treat it, as they did, as a "military offence." Many smoked, but "the crime was to be found out." When the prohibition was afterwards removed it was discovered that, not being forbidden, smoking decreased.

Watson did not indulge in the pranks of cadets, but neither did he greatly enjoy their company. His reserve was against him. In May, 1865, after a year and a half's experience of the Academy, he writes to his mother: "I sometimes do not find it easy to get on well with other fellows; you know it was never

much my way, and it often seems hard. I try to do my best, and that is all I can do." He got on better with the class in October, but in December he writes rather doubtfully: "On the whole, it has been a pleasant time, and I shall for some reasons be sorry to leave the Academy, for others glad. Now, probably we shall have a good while together." His heart was still turned towards home. He is pleased when he gets his term's "first" as usual. "If it makes you happy, that is all I want, and what, to a great extent, makes me work." He had made up his mind, as he confessed afterwards, to be always first, and this object outweighed all other interests, social and sporting. He never cared for the usual field games nor for fishing or shooting, though he played racquets sometimes and enjoyed skating. Yet he was never the "smug" or the prig, and his fellow-cadets liked as well as respected him. But he was lonely, and his letters are full of his longing for his own people. "I wish you could know how awfully, how terribly, I want some of you to talk to," he tells his sister, and he goes on to say how when these lonely fits are on him he attacks his books "almost madly." "This can go to you, and I cannot. It is rather hard." He is jealous of the posted letter which reaches her next day in Dublin while he is tied to Woolwich. These letters are full of the books he was reading, and the choice is indicative. They included Ruskin, the "Imitatio," Kingsley, Carlyle's "Heroes," "In Memoriam," and the Life of the Chevalier Bayard—"the man was always a favourite of mine." Over his mantelpiece hung a portrait of Claverhouse. He was reading a good deal of poetry, and was evidently in a romantic mood, which he diligently strove to conceal. Enthusiasm he could appreciate, as his later devotion to Gordon proved, but he carefully avoided the least expression of it. Most of his adjec-

tives (even "pleasant") are qualified by "rather." He insists on "the pleasure of imagination," yet he seldom exercised it except to himself. This deliberate self-repression naturally robs his letters of charm, nor can one expect much originality of criticism in the chatty correspondence of a young cadet. One cannot help feeling that he could have written very differently if he had the right correspondent to draw him out of his shell. In spite of his laborious and solitary life he protests again and again that he was happy. "I have come to the conclusion, and that not till after due deliberation, that there never was anyone happier than I have been hitherto." But one feels that the happiness centred in home, not in the life of the Academy. Like the dreamer in "Pilgrims of the Rhine" (he writes to his sister), who lived his real existence in his sleep, "I go home when I go to bed, and am generally talking to you while I am asleep. It is queer how perfectly certain I am sometimes that I am at home." He hardly made the utmost of the materials at hand.

It was much the same at Chatham, where he joined the Royal Engineers' Establishment as Lieutenant on May 17, 1866. His commission was dated April 17. His C.O., Major-General Lintorn Simmons, reported to the Deputy-Adjutant-General, March 7, 1868, that Lieutenant Watson, R.E., had completed his course of instruction in two months' less time than was allowed for it, and added that he

"is a good mathematician and draws neatly and well. He applies himself most steadily and perseveringly to his work, all of which he has done very thoroughly and very well. He is, moreover, very zealous, attentive, and conscientious in the discharge of his duties, and, being possessed of very superior abilities, he gives every promise of becoming a most valuable officer."

Watson had been one of a party who officially visited the Paris Exposition of 1867, and the following letter to his mother from the famous old sapper, Sir John Burgoyne, dated September 1, 1867, refers to this visit:

"We cannot hear too much of a good thing; and though you have abundance of good accounts of the satisfactory progress that your son, who is my brother-officer, is making in the world, you will not be sorry to hear more.

"Captain Stotherd, of the Royal Engineers, was sent to the Paris Exhibition to collect information on military engineering matters; he had some officers to assist him, selected for their zeal and knowledge; your son was one of them. Captain Stotherd writes to me on the subject of a rock-boring machine in which, from description, I took an interest, and begged him to make enquiries. 'I got Lieutenant Watson, one of the young officers who was at Paris with me, and a very intelligent and promising officer, to write a description of it which will go with the other reports;' and it is manifest that he was not aware that I took any interest in Lieutenant Watson when he wrote;

"I rejoice with you exceedingly that he is distinguishing himself so early.

"My dear Mrs. Watson,
"Yours faithfully,
"J. F. BURGOYNE."

Burgoyne was then, at the age of eighty-six, still Inspector-General of Fortifications, and he exerted himself to forward Watson's wishes, which tended towards service in India; but the plan fell through.

At Chatham there was, of course, more outside society than at Woolwich, and Watson used occasionally to spend the turn of the week with his relations at Shortlands, near Bromley, and with friends, with whom his engaging manner and easy talk made him very popular; but he shared as little as possible in the balls and sports of the Corps, and "public ceremonies

are not much to my taste." Nor does he seem to have been in the smallest degree touched by " affairs of the heart." The " mania for getting married " among his acquaintance astonished him. " It seems odd to me to see the people we knew small married," he had written in 1864. " I don't quite like it; it makes me seem older, though I feel as young as I did ten years ago." Love-making was " amusing to a spectator like myself," he says three years later. " I am getting rather out of practice in general female conversation."

His chief enjoyment whilst at Chatham was in the long walks which the practice of surveying required. In a letter to his sister (July 9, 1867), he tells of a ramble to Rainham and Boxley, through the wooded lands of Kent:

" There is nothing pleasanter than a walk through a thick wood, where it is difficult to see more than a few yards on each side, and you feel completely alone, perhaps not meeting a human being for miles. I never saw a greater variety of wild-flowers than grow upon the hills here, all those we used to look for in days past and many I do not know. They seem to remind me of many things, but you may think that absurd. The wild strawberries, too, acquire a glorious perfection superior to any I have yet met with, both in size and sweetness. We found a splendid bed the other day, fortunately within the limits of our survey, down in a deep woody valley where they are not likely to be disturbed, so that I shall probably pay it another visit. Taking it all round, the district about here comes up to my ideal of English country better than any I have yet been in. The farms, too, with their orchards and other surroundings, look just like what they are described in ' England's Yeomen ' and other books of that kind. I have made acquaintance with several of the farmers, having to ask leave to survey their land and also to obtain hop-poles to make use of as trigonometrical marks."

A letter to his sister written a little later (April 26, 1870) is more self-revealing than usual with him. Returning from home, he says, to active duties makes him almost feel as if in changing his atmosphere he became changed himself in mind and body. "At home I am, as it were, still a boy; but here the different position adds years to my life and compels me to take stand as a man in the eyes of those around me;" and he goes on to reflect how much more difficult it must be to start in life among those who will persist in regarding one as still a boy. Yet he finds himself every time he leaves home more sorry to go than ever he was before. He does not look forward to foreign service "with any very glowing feelings of pleasure," but would rather serve his country at home.

"To travel abroad is no doubt very agreeable and of great value as an improvement of the mental powers" —this somewhat condescending sentiment comes oddly from one to whom travelling was afterwards a chief delight and recreation—"but foreign service in the ordinary acceptation of the term means remaining at one station, and that probably an uninteresting and uninstructive one, for periods varying from three to seven years, during which time the faculties of the mind must, I should imagine, undergo a more or less rapidly oxidizing process. . . . But perhaps, after all, place is of far less importance than action, and the principal thing to be considered is not so much what we do or where we do it, as how we do what we do—a precept which you have probably heard me give utterance to more than once before, but which always strikes me as being a principle of the first importance and one worthy of being recorded as a corollary to that of St. Louis of France: 'Do not say aught of which, if all the world knew it, you would be ashamed to acknowledge, "I did or said that."'

"Of all sins, slothfulness is, in my opinion, one of the most difficult to get the better of—at least, in my own case—and prevents one doing half the good that

one might do if only one could get the better of it and carry out more fully the day-dreams of usefulness which it is so easy to form in the imagination and so very difficult to fulfil in actual practice. But it really does appear almost impossible to get the better of it—perhaps in great part owing to our want of faith and neglect of prayerfully looking to God for assistance to overcome this evil; for there is no doubt that the more we pray and the more entirely we trust in Him to help us, and the less we depend on ourselves, the easier it is to conquer this as well as all other temptations of the Devil. . . . You sometimes abuse me for not speaking enough to others about religion, but really the knowing what I myself do, or rather what I do not do, greatly hinders my doing so, as preaching without corresponding practice would always seem more likely to produce an evil than a good effect.

"I have written just what I have been thinking about, and it is to be hoped that you will not think me stupid and egotistical for having run like this, talking about myself; . . . but sometimes it is pleasant to put one's ideas upon paper just as they come into the mind, if they are not likely to be severely criticized."

One wishes he did it more often; but this dread of criticism—really a self-conscious fear of wearing his heart upon his sleeve for daws to peck at—continually cramped his expression of his real self, and only to this sister, and rarely to her, did he unburden his soul on the things that made up his inner life. His remorse for slothfulness is peculiarly striking in one who overcame the fault so triumphantly that in later life one could scarcely imagine a more alert and energetic character.

One amusing story of the Chatham days comes from his brother-officer, now Major-General Sir Elliott Wood, K.C.B., who was one of Watson's chosen friends, and afterwards served with him in various employments and campaigns. Writing to me (June,

1916), he recalls the life at Chatham, when he found Watson

" decidedly sociable and bright in society, a good talker and listener too; balls or dances were not in his line, nor was the usual ' small talk ' about amusements, games, and sports; but for all that, he was a distinctly cheery and a loyal and constant friend. As a cadet I knew him to be of very high character and of unusual intellectual attainments, and these qualities, combined with straightforward honesty of purpose, marked him throughout his life.

" He joined the R.E. at Chatham early in 1866, some time after I did, and very soon he gave me the worst quarter of an hour in my life, yachting in the Medway. I had taken him out in a small cutter, with no other ' hand,' though he knew nothing of sailing; and we had gone beyond Sheerness, where we turned to run home before the wind. I asked him to ' boom out the foresail,' but as he did not then know nautical terms, I recognized I must do it myself if we were to overhaul another yacht with which we were having a friendly race. I knew the danger of giving him the helm even for a minute, but Watson declared it would be child's play to keep her pointing for a certain fixed mark; so with careful warnings I gave him the tiller. I had only taken four steps when I heard a shout and was knocked overboard, but caught the shrouds with one hand, the yacht heeling over greatly and my body being dragged through the water. On hauling myself on board, there was no Watson! I rushed to the helm; the tiller was gone and there was my friend bobbing about in the choppy sea a hundred yards or more off! There was nothing to do but to make a rapid succession of very short tacks, hauling in first the mainsheet, then running forward to the foresail, being compelled to repeat the operation of going about at the will of the boat. . . .

" The story indicated early Watson's Eastern proclivities. Instead of steering from the well, he had proceeded to squat cross-legged on the deck, and while doing so the boom gybed, sweeping him into the sea, and me afterwards. He had previously

taken off his boots, had stuck to the tiller, and could swim.

" His only comment on the situation was that he was vastly amused at my ridiculous antics running up and down the deck. Of course, he was unaware why it was necessary."

CHAPTER III

PIONEER WORK

(1868-1874)

On completing his course at Chatham, Watson was sent to Ireland to take charge of the work of remodelling the defences of Carlisle Fort, in Queenstown Harbour. He joined at Cork, April 23, 1868, and put up for a week at Whitegate, " rather cleaner than most Irish villages," before taking up quarters in the fort. The construction of the new defences in the harbour was, of course, carried out under detailed instructions from the War Office, and left no room for individual initiative. Watson had sixteen sappers under his command and a guard of marines; the work went on steadily but slowly, and the routine of drills, parades, and inspections was monotonous. Watson was no lover of the parade-ground, and disliked drills and field-days; though when Colonel Stotherd made him his Adjutant, R.E., for the 2nd Division of the Southern Army in the manœuvres on Salisbury Plain in August-September, 1872, he acquitted himself with his usual efficiency, and was warmly thanked by his Commanding Officer for his services. The victory of the Southern Army at the " Battle of Codford" gave him great satisfaction; but it is amusing, in these days of armies reckoned by millions, to read that the whole force at the " Battle of Codford " numbered 28,000 men.

The duty of superintending the defence works at

Carlisle Fort did not take up much of his day, after the early months of organizing and getting his men into their swing. The rest of the time was spent much more agreeably. There were few places in the sixties and early seventies where a prepossessing young soldier could enjoy life better than in county Cork. The Irish landlords were not yet utterly despoiled, and there were numerous country-houses within easy distances where the famous hospitality of the Irish gentry still abounded. They did not neglect the staff at the forts of Spike Island, Camden, Carlisle, and Haulbowline, and Watson, for his part, delighted in riding or walking—he kept a horse, but he was always a good walker, and thought nothing of getting wet through—to one house after the other, to lunch or dinner, or both, often sleeping where he dined. In those days your Irish host seldom let you leave before dinner, and he kept you for the night if he possibly could. Watson seldom passed a day without several visits, and it is clear that his hosts were charmed to welcome him.

Throughout his life from 1864 to 1916 he kept a careful Diary, of the " matter-of-fact " kind, every day, putting down where he went, whom he met, and so on, but here and there just a little of his feelings and impressions peeps through, in a bashful and not too explicit way. One can pick up a good deal about a man's character and mode of life from even a matter-of-fact Diary, and cryptic allusions shed interesting lights. When we come across mysterious words—" chino psychonomy," " spichopia," " ideology," for instance—in connection with interesting walks and talks, we may look beneath the surface. Watson prudently used initials, as a rule, to designate his friends, and even these are altered here; but an extract or two will show what is meant.

"Otter hunt. Rode after hunt. Through Rostellan to Castlemary, P. and Q. there. Eat nuts, and walk————(a very long dash). East wind. In grape-house. Too large party; but with P., Q., and R. to Ag, a ride to be remembered. P's horse cast a shoe. Crossed Ferry. P. tired. Dined at Ag. Rode home; nearly fell off horse. A sad day."

"Wet morning. Rode to C. M. Roches', Ashgrove, Glenmore, and walked with P. and eat gooseberries in the deer-park; dined. . . . P. stopped; took her in to dinner. Rode home. Dark night."

"Heard that P. was engaged to X. Talk at railway. Last November. Cold and dreary. Little sad. They drove back. I missed steamer and took boat to Whitegate. Angry after dinner. Completely puzzled."

She married another man, and there it ends. But Watson, no doubt, had enjoyed it all while it lasted—the "gooseberries in the deer-park," of all odd places, the frequent strawberry feasts, "a certain seat," and many a ride and many a talk. "There are none of Beauty's daughters," apostrophized by Moore, more dangerous, and yet safer, than Irish girls: the paradox needs no explanation to those who know them. They gave the young sapper what would now be called "a perfectly heavenly time," and if he suffered a few bad twinges and felt "a little sad," it was only the thorn with the rose. It does not appear to have broken his heart; in fact, one has a suspicion that, like Captain McHeath, he was drawn in two ways and could have been "happy with either." One could scarcely roam about county Cork, and spend day after day at Aghada, Castlemary, Ashgrove, Glenmore, Corkbeg, and half a dozen other hospitable, pleasure-loving houses, among such warm-hearted folk as the Penroses, Fitz-Geralds, Longfields, Frenches, and Roches, without "paying forfeit" to the delectable daughters of Erin. Whatever the penalties, it was worth it. And it is worth while too to glance at the

guarded entries in these Diaries, if only to disabuse one's mind of the possible idea that the studious, rather solitary cadet of Woolwich and Chatham days was a dry kind of " smug," or the least little atom of a prig. In county Cork, Watson proved that he could enjoy country life and charming people with the best, and had quite forgotten that he was " out of practice in general female conversation," with which, indeed, he seems now to have become agreeably at home.

It was all very well to put off his sister with cold-blooded descriptions—as " she is a good girl and has, I think, something in her "; or, " she is certainly not what you would call pretty, but that is not a matter of much consequence." One writes such things to one's sisters, and they do not believe them. When he was actually inveigled by a fair lady into taking a Sunday-school class for a time, we may be sure that the sister was not deceived.

Yet in spite of a whirl of social pleasures, including croquet—then a comparatively new and doubtful joy, said to have been first introduced into Ireland from the South of France—cricket matches, and regattas, and even dancing now and then, he had not lost his delight in solitary reading. He loved to paddle in a canoe or dinghy to one or other of the many quiet creeks in the spacious harbour, to read his favourite books, and " to look at the sea—for there is a great deal to read in that, but I could not put it into words "; it was " the real sea," not the estuary of the Thames or even St. George's Channel. Solitude still had its occasional sway over him, and was his teacher, as it always is to men who can think. Irishman as he was by birth, he had none of the Irishman's toleration of squalor, nor of the delight in funerals which furnish such rapturous joy to the Irish peasant. He was disgusted with the drunken

debauch of the whole neighbourhood over the funeral of his colleague Nugent, whose death by drowning in the gale of October 12, 1870, deeply affected him. He had often sailed with him in the yacht *Ella*, and had so far got over the inexperience of Chatham days that he sometimes sailed her himself. Watching the bibulous crowd, he says that the Irish peasantry are "removed but a few steps above uncivilized savages." "I do not like funerals."

Of course, the three years were not spent wholly at Carlisle Fort and its neighbourhood. Watson visited his family in Dublin now and then, and several of them came down to Queenstown. He went for a tour in the Lake District and several times in the Scottish Highlands, and was occasionally in London. In June, 1869, he took his degree of Master of Arts at Dublin. And then after being appointed temporarily in April, 1871, Divisional Officer at Newbridge, he was ordered to Chatham. "Left Carlisle Fort for good," he writes in his Diary of October 27, 1871. He was not sorry, for he wanted more interesting and more original work, and he counted rightly on meeting his Munster friends often in his frequent visits to his people in Dublin; he also spent a very happy "leave" among them in county Cork in September, 1873. He had enjoyed life exceedingly in the South of Ireland, and had developed in many ways; but he knew that his career was not laid in country-houses, and that life held something more for him than croquet, even with the most delightful Irish girls.

Meanwhile an opening had occurred for special work of a kind that brought into play the mathematical and inventive talents which had been cultivated during his studious years at Woolwich and Chatham. As early as the summer of 1867 he was working at what he calls in his Diary "torpedo project"; and in March, 1871, he had come over to

England for a time to pass through a course of submarine mining under Captain Stotherd, R.E., in the electrical school and on board the *Volta* at Chatham. In October, after his recall from Ireland, he joined the first R.E. company of submarine miners in November, and in the following January was put in charge of the submarine experiments at Sheerness. For two years he devoted most of his zeal to these and similar experiments.

Submarine mines, since the beginning of the Great War, have been the common talk of everybody; but in 1871 they were practically unexplored novelties.

"The use of submarines," wrote Watson (in 1908), "in modern war may be said to date from 1854, when the Russians used a clumsy and ineffective kind of mine, or 'torpedo,' as it was then called, in the defence of the Baltic ports. These were mechanical mines, containing a small charge of gunpowder, and fitted with a somewhat rude device, by means of which the charge was ignited when the mine was struck by a ship. It was, however, in the American Civil War that submarine mines were first used with considerable effect, and the results obtained proved so conclusively the great advantages of these novel weapons that the question of their employment began to be taken up by European Powers, with the view of deciding upon the best form of mine, the most satisfactory method of firing them, and the system of employing them for the defence of harbours and navigable waters. . . . England took up the subject in the early sixties, and a long series of experiments was carried out by the Royal Engineers at Chatham and elsewhere, preparatory to the establishment of a submarine mining service at military and commercial harbours at home and abroad; . . . but it was not until 1871, after the advantages of the submarine defence had been clearly proved by the events in the Franco-German War, that the Government definitely decided to establish a submarine mining corps. The fourth company of the Royal Engineers was detailed for the service, the necessary stores were purchased

out of a Vote of Credit, and a substantial foundation was laid upon which to build up this most important system of defence."

One of Watson's most striking qualities was his power of grasping the importance of new inventions. He had the gift of prescience, and just as he foresaw the coming rôle of the "torpedo" or submarine mine in naval warfare, so did he prophesy and, as far as he could, press upon the laggard authorities the future importance of military airships. In the same way, at a later date, he was a zealous prophet of Universal Service at a time when even Lord Roberts's warnings were unheeded. Had Watson's counsels prevailed at the War Office, we should have had a fleet of airships before the Great War, and we should have presented to Europe the deterrent spectacle of a nation in arms, with vital effect upon the political situation.

In 1871 a Corps Torpedo Committee, under the presidency of Colonel Nugent, R.E., dealt with the development of submarine mining, and Watson worked partly under this Committee. But he had also the very laborious and intricate task of designing *ab initio* the mines and all the complicated apparatus connected with them, and of starting a separate department at Woolwich Dockyard, with all the necessary workshops, testing-rooms, and store-rooms for hundreds of miles of cable, etc., and all the materials for their manufacture and supply. "There were at the time no regulations for testing cables or examining stores, and no sealed patterns. These all had to be settled as the work went on. Fortunately, I had some very good N.C.O.'s and hard-working sappers, so the job was finished in what I believe was considered a satisfactory manner." It was the kind of work for which the Royal Engineer officer is peculiarly qualified, and in which he usually delights. Watson

evidently enjoyed it, and did it so well that he was officially complimented when Mr. Cardwell, then Secretary of State for War, who was keenly interested in submarine mining, visited the new department in May, with the Under-Secretary Lord Lansdowne. This work occupied most of 1872. During this and the following year the department was busy in preparing and despatching submarine mining stores to various stations, and the tedious process of testing cables for observation mines took up a great deal of Watson's time.

He did much more than this. In conjunction with Lieutenant Hall, R.N., who was a member of the Torpedo Committee, at the beginning of December, 1872, he carried out a series of important experiments in explosives at Weston-super-Mare.

The objects of the experiments (to quote Lieutenant Colonel C. H. Nugent's preface to Watson's official printed Report, January 3, 1873) were—

(1) To obtain a comparison of the explosive force of gunpowder, of picric powder, and of compressed gun-cotton, when exploded under similar conditions.
(2) To obtain a comparison of the explosive force of nitrated gun-cotton and compressed gun-cotton.
(3) To ascertain the effects of the depths of immersion upon the explosions.
(4) To ascertain whether the explosive power of compressed gun-cotton is affected by its employment in a damp condition.
(5) To ascertain whether compressed gun-cotton can be completely exploded when in a thoroughly wet state.

Hundred-pound charges were used, and Weston-super-Mare was chosen, because the level bottom of

the bay is remarkably suitable for observing the effects of the explosions, the mud being fairly uniform and tenacious enough to keep its shape for two or three tides, between which, at low water, the uncovered craters bored by the explosions could be studied. The results of these experiments were important. The immense superiority of gun-cotton over gunpowder in destructive effect was proved, and it was discovered that gun-cotton in a wet state (thus possessing none of the inflammable properties of the dry material) was at least as effective as when dry. This discovery led to the adoption of wet gun-cotton as a destructive in both services for the next forty years and more.* Further experiments were conducted by Watson at Stokes Bay in April, 1873, to estimate the effects of mines exploded at various depths and at different distances from the objective, and these were continued from time to time during the year. His work was considered so important that when Sir Lintorn Simmons wanted to get him as his assistant at the Royal Military Academy he was told by the Inspector-General of Fortifications that Lieutenant Watson could not be spared.

The experimenter is almost necessarily also an inventor. Experiments invariably lead to improvements and adaptations. In June, 1874, Watson submitted to the Admiralty a device which was intended to supersede the spar "torpedo." His invention consisted in a charge towed by a steamboat and electrically exploded when close enough to an enemy ship. He had, however, been just forestalled by a naval officer who designed what was then known as the Harvey torpedo, an honourable relic of the past which is now as dead as Greek fire. Although his invention was not accepted, he was

* I am indebted to my son, Commander R. H. Lane-Poole, R.N., for information on this subject.

recognized as a leading authority in submarine mining, and already in January, 1874, he had been invited by the Committee of the Royal Artillery Institution to contribute a paper on the subject to the Proceedings.

By this time Watson's store department at Woolwich was in full working order; designs were standardized, and his pioneer work in this department was ended. His corps of submarine miners, however, was gradually enlarged, more companies of Royal Engineers were added from time to time, and Militia and Volunteer submarine mining divisions were raised and thoroughly trained in all the technicalities of the science. All this had been planned by Watson in a memorandum dated as early as July 12, 1872.

"These Militia and Volunteer units," he wrote long afterwards (1908), "were probably among the best of the Auxiliary Forces in the United Kingdom, and had an esprit de corps which was remarkable. Speaking generally, the submarine defence of the fortified naval harbours at home and abroad was entrusted to the Royal Engineers and Militia, while the Volunteers were specially employed in connection with the defence of commercial ports at home, each division for the district in which the officers and men of the division lived. It would be difficult to imagine a better way of utilizing Militia in the defence of their country, as they would serve in time of war in the places with which they were thoroughly acquainted, and for the protection of their own homes."

While the personnel of the submarine mining service had thus been admirably organized, the material had also steadily improved in excellence and completeness, and was certainly equal to that of any country in the world. The submarine mines used were electrical, and therefore quite innocuous to friendly vessels, as they could not be exploded except at the will of the operator on shore; while in

many cases the mines were ground mines, lying at the bottom of the sea, and only capable of being fired by observation. The objection raised to the use of mechanical mines did not, therefore, apply to the British system of submarine defence. In addition to the electrical mines there was, at certain stations, an installation known as the Brennan torpedo, by means of which a locomotive mine, actuated by wires from the shore, could follow a hostile vessel and sink it at the proper moment. An invention of this kind added not only to the physical, but also to the moral excellence of defence; and it must not be forgotten with regard to submarine mines that their moral power is as great as, if not greater than, their physical, as no enemy would care to risk his war vessels in waters properly guarded with submarine mines until steps had been taken for their removal. Indeed, empty barrels have sometimes proved quite formidable enough to deter an enemy from attacking.

At the beginning of 1905 there were employed in submarine mining *thirteen* R.E. companies, *twelve* Militia, and *seven* Volunteer divisions, besides *five* local companies at stations abroad.

"The fortified harbours" (wrote Watson) "in the United Kingdom provided with a system of mine defence were Portsmouth, Plymouth, Harwich, Falmouth, Milford Haven, the Thames and the Medway, the Humber and Cork Harbour; while abroad there were Malta, Bermuda, Halifax, Esquimalt, Jamaica, Mauritius, Ceylon, Hong-Kong and Singapore. In addition to these were the commercial harbours situated on the Tyne, Tees, Severn, Mersey, Forth, and Clyde, at each of which a Volunteer division was stationed. At these places the men were at hand, the mines and other stores ready for use, and, in case of war, the whole system of defence would have been installed in a very short time.

"Such was the state of affairs at the beginning of 1905, when an extraordinary change was made, and

the whole of the thoroughly organized submarine mining service, which had been built up with such care, and had reached such a state of perfection, was suddenly wiped out. The Royal Engineer companies ceased to be submarine mining companies, and not long afterwards the Militia divisions were disbanded and the Volunteer divisions were removed from their submarine mining duties. The reasons for this drastic revolution have never been clearly explained, and still remain a mystery as far as the public is concerned."

In the Memorandum by the Secretary of State for War which accompanied the Army Estimates for 1905-06, there was a paragraph referring to the subject:

"In November, 1903, a proposal was made to the Admiralty that the War Office should hand over to the Admiralty the whole of the submarine mines and appliances in the naval ports; that similar transfers should take place in naval ports abroad, when a sufficient number of submarine boats was available to protect the passages now closed by submarine mines; and that the submarine defence in the home ports, other than the naval ports, should be abandoned by the Army as soon as the Admiralty could supply an alternative defence. These suggestions have been discussed by the Committee of Imperial Defence, and the Admiralty has now agreed to adopt the course proposed."

Naturally the man to whom, above all others, the creation and development of the submarine mining corps was due felt this drastic change very bitterly. The waste of public money in scrapping the accumulated stores and apparatus was bad enough; but the destruction of a skilled body of miners, carefully trained by the experience of thirty years' organization, without any attempt to place their knowledge or their experimental records at the service of their successors, or, indeed, to provide *any* organized

successors at all, seemed to him a wanton act of unpardonable folly.

" If England is involved in a war," he wrote (1908), " which lays her coasts open to the attack of hostile vessels, a submarine defence will have to be improvised, and this will not be so efficient as the corps which has recently been abolished."

How far the prophecy was realized in the Great War, seven years after it was written, and how far the discarded system had to be resuscitated, are matters for future naval history.

The change, however, it should be remembered, was not due to any discrimination between the ability of naval and Royal Engineer officers to deal with submarine mining. It was due to a change in policy. Hitherto submarine mines had been held to be useful only for defence. Indeed, Commander (now Admiral of the Fleet) Sir E. H. Seymour, K.C.B., wrote in April, 1872, to Watson, on his leaving Carlisle Fort (and incidentally, as his friend rashly imagined, " escaping the toils of the daughters of Erin "):

" I dare say you are interested in the torpedo work. They must probably become very important engines, especially for defence: for offence among ships we hardly know how to manage them yet."

But from 1905, or earlier, it was decided by the naval authorities, rightly or wrongly, that defensive mines for harbours were no longer necessary, and that the rôle of the submarine mine in future must be offensive. The disruption of the land submarine mining corps was the natural consequence of this decision. The functions of the defensive mine are now being definitely fixed in the progress of the Great War, and it would be premature at this moment to offer an opinion and still more to pass judgment, on the Government's action.

Watson's energies in 1872 to 1874 were not restricted to the development of the submarine mining corps. He was also busily employed in experiments in connection with military balloons, the forerunners of the present airships. In the year 1873 there are frequent entries in his Diary relating to appointments and experiments, chiefly at Woolwich, in connection with balloons. Sir Frederick Abel, F.R.S., the celebrated chemist and expert on explosives, served on the Balloon Committee and worked with Watson in his experiments for generating hydrogen, by passing steam over red-hot iron. Abel, Henry Gordon, Scratchley, and Beaumont, are the names that most often occur in these entries. Gordon (afterwards Sir Henry), the Controller of the Arsenal, was the brother of "Chinese" Gordon, with whom Watson was soon to be intimately associated. Major (afterwards Sir P. H.) Scratchley was Regimental Major, R.E., in 1873, and Inspector of Works at the Arsenal, and Captain Fred Beaumont, R.E., a man of remarkably inventive talent, was in charge of railways there, and Watson, who had succeeded him in this branch, must have found him a stimulating associate.

The experiments in producing gas for balloons lasted through the summer and autumn of 1873, and in December Watson wrote an elaborate Report "on the Generation of Hydrogen by passing Steam over Hot Iron." He was also in communication with the famous aeronaut Coxwell with a view to the manufacture of one or two military balloons for the West Coast of Africa, then the scene of Wolseley's Ashanti expedition; for McClellan's balloon staff during the American Civil War had shown the utility of balloon observations, and also the difficulties of transport. Fresh attention had been drawn to the subject by numerous escapes by balloons from Paris during the siege. There was, of course, so far no adequate means

of steering balloons—the petrol motor was still in the future—but captive balloons had proved useful in observing the enemy's positions, and, in favourable weather conditions, free balloons had been successfully employed. Watson drew up the estimates for the manufacture (by Coxwell) and the equipment of two balloons to be inflated by means of the sulphuric acid process, and reported on August 8, 1873; but Abel, for the Balloon Committee, whilst accepting Watson's estimate for equipment, as based upon actual experiment, demurred to the high price asked by Coxwell, and also to the length of time he required for the manufacture of a balloon, which, it was thought, would not arrive in time for the campaign. In the end the project was abandoned by the Government. The subject of military balloons, however, was not forgotten by Watson. We shall find him busy with it some years later in connection with Colonel Templer. But in 1874 everything else had to be put aside for his work with Gordon in the Sudan.

The three years since he had left Carlisle Fort had been full of work and experience, and had proved specially formative in Watson's mental growth. In Cork he had learnt to enjoy life in a genial, human way, and had thrown himself gaily into the happy sporting diversions of well-bred Irish society. In London—for he was almost as much in town as at Woolwich, running up daily, and often dining and sleeping at his club—he was equally sociable, but instead of sportsmen he cultivated men of science, inventors, mechanicians, and especially officers of his own scientific corps and of the Royal Artillery. The friendship of men like Abel and Beaumont was invaluable to the keen young man, whose whole mind was now bent on experiment and invention. Among the witnesses of his and Hall's experiments at Weston-

super-Mare were Abel, Abney, Majendie, Nugent, and Younghusband. He learnt much from visits to great engineering factories all over England. He had never forgotten an early visit to Birmingham in 1859, when his father took him to see several of the great factories, and he made notes of the various processes. His "torpedo" experiments took him to Birmingham, Sheffield, Bedford, and other manufacturing centres, in search of materials and information. He watched the trials of the "fish torpedo" and of the Moncrieff gun.

His Diary shows him always on the move. The "slothfulness" he formerly deplored no longer troubled him. He was often up at 5.30, and divided his day between Woolwich, Chatham, Sheerness, and London, where he was frequently at the War Office to consult Nugent, and he often spent the night with his mother's relations at Shortlands, near Bromley, or with friends at Putney. He was, as we have said, a great walker—this and regular matches of racquets kept him in condition—and on a fine night would walk back from Putney to his London club, or from Shortlands to Woolwich or Blackheath, where he would dine with Colonel Henry Gordon or the ever-friendly Lintorn Simmons, his former Chief at Chatham and now Director of the Royal Military Academy. He even went to dances sometimes, and found them "rather pleasant," but more often he declined. He went to Evesham to explore his probable ancestry at Bengeworth, visited Cambridge and Ely, and went over to Dublin whenever he could get leave, not only to see his family, whom he also met often in London—his father belonged to the same club and was frequently in town—but to keep up his intimacy with his Cork friends, especially the Penroses, to whom he was much attached and with whom he stayed during his leave in 1873 for some memorably happy days, and was exceedingly "sorry to go."

How he managed to go about so much and yet keep within his modest pay, as he did, with very little in the way of parental allowances, would be a mystery if he had not kept strict accounts in his Diary, which show that he had no expensive tastes, lived very simply, and certainly spent nothing on luxuries or even ordinary pleasures. There is no entry of tickets for theatres, and very few for concerts, and the only theatrical entertainment he seems to have patronized was the German Reeds', and that chiefly to amuse his younger brother. No one could be less self-indulgent. When he had a free evening, he devoted it to German. He was one of the men who realized what the Germans could teach us in military science, and had not only made himself a thorough master of their language, and could write a good letter in the abominable German cursive hand, but early in 1874 translated Brunner's " Elements of Fortress Warfare " for private circulation among the officers of the Royal Engineers (edited by Lieutenant-Colonel W. Lennox, 1875). They were playing the " Kriegspiel " at the Royal Artillery Institution early in 1873, and Watson observes critically that it was " not very well done."

The years 1871-1874 had been fruitful. He was now to enter upon a new phase and a novel scene.

CHAPTER IV

WITH GORDON IN THE SUDAN

(1874-75)

WHILST Watson was going through his course at Woolwich and Chatham, there was a man near-by at Gravesend who was to exert a profound influence over him, not only whilst living, but long after his tragic death. "Chinese" Gordon, returning home after his memorable exploits with "the Ever Victorious Army" during the Tai-ping Rebellion in China, had been appointed Commanding Royal Engineer at Sheerness in 1865, and held the post till he went off on the Danube Boundary Commission in October, 1871. All this time Watson does not seem to have met him: fourteen years' seniority is not easily bridged in the Service. But Gordon's name was a household word in the sixties, and Watson, of course, knew of his reputation and admired his energy and courage; whilst his work among the boys at Gravesend was such as appealed to the younger man's sense of "social service," though that phrase was not yet fashionable. Besides, Gordon's brother, afterwards Sir Henry, was Controller of Woolwich Arsenal during the time when Watson was experimenting in hydrogen and forming the "torpedo" stores, and the two were frequently in consultation. It was doubtless through him that the young Lieutenant's qualifications were specially brought to Charles Gordon's notice when he was looking for assistance in his work in the Egyptian

Sudan; and after he had accepted the government of the Equatorial Provinces under the Khedive, one of his first steps was to ask Watson to join him.

C. G. Gordon to C. M. Watson.

"Address H.M. CONSUL-GENERAL,
CAIRO,
"*February* 17, 1874.

"DEAR WATSON,

"There is a Lieutenant R. E. Chippendall at Glasgow. I want to know what both you and he want per ann. to go up country with me (remembering I engage to no fixed term of service). I find you subsistence, I find you passage out, I find you arms, etc., and you have only to find your clothes. I do not know if I can manage to take you both, or even one, but I might be able to do so.

"Ask Chippendall, who is quite unknown, to write out his answer, and oblige,

"Yours sincerely,
"C. G. GORDON.

P.S.—"I may write to you before I leave Cairo, which I do on Monday next, and offer you £500 a year, and Chippendall, unless you know anything against him, £300 (it is very little, but I cannot get more), and £40 to find your passage out to Cairo.

"If you choose to wait till next year, I could ask for more for both of you."

There was no hesitation about the answer. The Diary has these brief entries:

"*March* 6.—Saw Gordon. Got note from C. G. about Egypt.

"*March* 7.—To Arsenal. Saw Gordon, and told him I would go to join C. G. Wrote to Gordon.

"*March* 9.—Wrote to Gordon to say I would go with him."

He had, in fact, replied at once, accepting Gordon's invitation on the very day he received it, and on the following day he sent his acceptance through General Stanton, H.M. Consul-General in Egypt,

enclosing a letter of recommendation to the Consul from Gordon's brother.

One might ask why Watson instantly threw up the scientific work in which he was making his mark and from which a very little time before he could not be spared, to plunge into unknown and uncertain adventures. But it was his rule " never to refuse a job," and this special " job " had the great attractions of Gordon's glamour and the taste for travel which later became almost a passion. To explore Central Africa was to realize a dream; and the work was as strictly scientific as making " torpedoes " or hydrogen. Watson was not much given to hero-worship, but he had not forgotten his early admiration for the Chevalier Bayard, and in Gordon he found a living Bayard with a strong tinge of Don Quixote at his best. Not that he was ever a blind worshipper. He came to know Gordon's faults and eccentricities too well for the undiscriminating adoration which less informed people have expressed for the most erratic, impulsive, and the most simple-minded, great-hearted gentleman that ever led a forlorn hope. We may think what we like about Gordon's fancies and beliefs, and his changes and vacillations in practice if not in policy, but none may question his purity of soul, his high ideals, and his utter renunciation of self. To such as found something of his noble fervour in their own souls his call was irresistible. He inspired them with a love and reverence that few men may win, and however wrong-headed and obstinate and fantastical might be some of his ideas, he still commanded the devotion which attaches to the man who rules hearts, the born leader.

Watson, more critical than most, was not the less Gordon's staunchest friend and defender. One might almost say that, after the last fatal months at Khartum, the dead hero became part of his religion,

and to speak irreverently of Gordon in the Pasha's presence was to run near to committing blasphemy. On such occasions he would not wax violent—I never saw him lose his temper—but the few quiet words he would say were fired by "the lightning of blue eyes." He was broad-minded enough to see the innumerable difficulties that Gordon was apt to bring to those who worked with him, but were not of his mind; he admitted that few men were harder to work under; but he never faltered in his reverent devotion to Gordon's character, and all who attacked it had to reckon with a formidable defender. Loyalty to his friends was with him a pure passion.

Some of Gordon's peculiarly trying ways (no one denies that he had them) soon became apparent. Henry Gordon had written to General Stanton at Cairo, "Has Charlie left any directions about Watson following him?" Of course he had not. Stanton replied, "He has left no instructions with me, and, as far as I could ascertain from him before his departure, did not expect any officer of the Corps to join him," and he added that it would take some months to get any reply from Central Africa. As a matter of fact, it was not till July 11 that Watson received a telegram from General Stanton: "The Khedive wishes you to come out as soon as possible." On the 28th he met Chippendall in London, and on the following day he left Dover for Egypt, accompanied by his brother Edward, and sailed from Ancona in the *Sumatra*, via Brindisi, to Alexandria, where he arrived on August 6. There he met General Stanton, and was introduced to the Egyptian Ministers, Sherif and Riaz Pashas. Even then he had to wait three weeks before the necessary contracts and arrangements were ready: "Curious ways of doing business," he remarks. But the delay enabled him to see the Pyramids and the beauty of Cairo. He and Chippendall were

received by the Khedive Ismail on the 17th at Gezira Palace, not yet an hotel. Finally, letters of recommendation to the various Governors on the route and the necessary Treasury orders for money were extracted from the dilatory officials; Chippendall, with the baggage, left Cairo for Ismailia on the 28th, and Watson—after another interview with the Khedive, who was celebrating the arrival of his mother from Constantinople by a great reception, a lavish slaughter of oxen in front of the Palace, and rich illuminations—at last got away on the 31st.

The rough notes of his journey from Suakin—or Sawakin, to spell it correctly—to Berber are worth printing, especially in view of the strenuous support he gave to that route in later years, when the relief of Gordon at Khartum was attempted.

"*Cairo, August* 31, *Monday*.—Tonino Bey came in last night about 12 o'clock and brought the Khedive's letter for Gordon, and said that the special train was ordered for 6 this morning. He was friendly, and said that he hoped he would see us all back soon safe.

"Mohammad called me at 5. . . . I stored gear, baksheeshed, and drove to the station. The special was all ready with a good express engine, and I started alone at 7.10. We got along at a good pace and reached Zagazig at 8.50, where the engine watered, and I coffee'd and had a chat with the station-master, who had been in England twenty-five years, and looked on it as a kind of Paradise. Soon after leaving Z. we got into the regular desert. Got to Ismailia Junction at 10.15, and took in water. I felt sorry for the people who had to live (there), as it is an absolute desert. It must take some trouble to keep the line clear of sand. It is for the most part level, not much cutting or filling, and plenty of stuff for the latter.

"Got to Suez at 12.5. There was a guard of soldiers on the platform, who presented (arms) as the train came up. Chippendall and Linant were there to meet me, and the station-master treated me with great

politeness. I went to see the Governor, Hasan Bey, and had coffee with him. He could only speak a little French, but we got on. Saïd Bey, the Director of the Azizieh Company, told us that his tug would start at 2.30 and we went on board the steamer *Hodeida*, where Chippendall had arranged all the baggage in the forehold in a most satisfactory way. Anchor was weighed at 4, and we steamed out of the harbour. Off at last. I always thought we never would be, and yet folk in Cairo said that our affair was arranged with wonderful celerity. Our party stands:

" Lieutenant Chippendall, R.E., attached to Colonel Gordon.
" Lieutenant Watson, R.E., attached to Colonel Gordon.
" Ernest Linant, French (but as fond as an Englishman of his cold bath), brother of a Linant who is with Colonel Gordon as interpreter. He goes on his own account, on the understanding that he is allowed to go with us, acting as interpreter.
" Carl Regner, German, my servant and cook.
" Mohammad, Nubian, Chippendall's servant.
" Eugène, French } Servants to Linant.
" Osman, Berberin }

" Weather pleasant and not too hot. As the cabins were small, we slept on the bridge, and found it cool and comfortable. The steamer *Hodeida* belongs to the Azizieh Company—really to the Khedive—is between 600 and 700 tons register tonnage, 220 feet long, 33 feet beam, double cylinder screw engines, 120 h.p., working to 600 h.p., goes about 7 to 8 knots, has Captain, 4 officers, and 80 men (all Turks); her two engineers are English. I was waked in the night by a good deal of talk, and I found a steamer was coming towards us. She ported, but after some consideration our commander decided it was better to starboard. The other vessel had the good sense to do the same, so we passed clear.

" *September* 1.—A quiet day on board. We unpacked and overhauled the instruments, and found all correct. A fresh north breeze all day which kept

the ship quite cool. The coast of the Gulf of Suez has really very grand rock scenery on both sides. Passed Shadwan Island just before sunset.

"*September* 2.—Much the same as yesterday. They had rigged us a capital bathroom close to our cabins, of canvas. Passed 'The Brothers' at 5.30 a.m. Reading, writing, sleeping, and doing nothing.

"*September* 3.—North wind still blowing; quite cool.

"*September* 4.—Slowed in afternoon, as the pilot would not venture to pass the coral reefs at night. Stood away from the shore and out to seaward. Blowing fresh off shore during the night.

"*September* 5.—At 1 a.m. changed course and stood in for shore to pass reef opposite Sheikh Barud (or Barghut), a port about 30 miles north of Suakin, which appears to be a far better harbour than the latter. If the railway is ever made from Sudan to Red Sea, it might take its place. It is easier to make, and there is plenty of good anchorage in from 12 to 16 fathoms. Steamed down along the shore inside the reefs, and reached Suakin at 4.30 p.m. The harbour has a narrow channel and not much water. The quarantine officer boarded us as soon as anchor was dropped, and we then went ashore to see the Governor Ala-ed-din Bey, who received us most kindly, and gave accommodation for ourselves, servants, and baggage. He is a very intelligent man, a Circassian; does not know any European language. Linant acted as interpreter. We dined with the Governor, Arab fashion, eating with our fingers. Also dined Emanuel, a Maltese who commanded a small Government steamer which is used in the suppression of the slave trade. He could speak English, and appeared to be a favourite of the Governor's. The latter is building a suite of apartments for the reception of visitors. They are not quite finished, but sufficiently so to admit of our occupying them. They face the north, looking out on the harbour, and are deliciously cool. The night was not at all too hot.

"*September* 6, *Sunday*.—Up at 5.30, and went down to Emanuel's steamer for a bathe. The water is very salt and, of course, buoyant. It is said to produce an irritation of the skin if bathed in too often. Back

to the town; and as the Governor did not breakfast till 12 o'clock, we nearly died of hunger. Suakin has a convict prison, but the number in confinement is small. It has a garrison of about 500 soldiers. Walked through the town when the sun went down. It is built partly on an island and partly on the mainland, and has probably a total population of about 15,000 inhabitants. Some of the houses are built of stone, but the majority are made of matting on poles, and cost about ten francs for a house. I went to see a garden belonging to the Governor, about half a mile from the town, but there was nothing in it but a few dates. This time of year nothing seems to grow on account of the heat. In the morning Chippendall and myself had gone on board to bid good-bye to the Captain of the *Hodeida*. Dined with the Governor.

"*September* 7.—Went out fishing with Emanuel the Captain at 4.30; bathed, and rowed out to the reefs. Beautiful corallines. Numbers of fishes of all shapes and colours; all we caught appeared to be of different species; among others, an octopus. Chippendall not well. After lunch went to see the Governor's garden.

"*September* 8.—Went to small steamer with Linant; bathed and fished. Talked to Captain about Sheikh Barud [Barghut], a port about 30 miles north of Suakin, where there is a good depth of water, plenty of room for large ships, and easy access, night and day, if lighthouses were built; whereas the harbour of Suakin is small, no water, impossible to make at night. Pilots think Sheikh Barud [Barghut] best harbour on coast.* No town there, and no use made of it at present. Dined with Governor. Chippendall did not dine. Camel-drivers came in. As Abu-Su'ud's large case was too big, it was cut into two; it contained nothing but silk-stuffs and tobacco; no arms or powder.

"*September* 9.—Went with Governor to post office, and found out arrangements about posting letters to England. Wrote after dinner to father and Edie

* It is now called Port Sudan, and is the terminus of the railway which connects Atbara on the Nile with the Red Sea and brings the products of the Sudan to the world's markets.

(his elder sister); prepared everything to start in the morning.

"*September* 10.—Baggage all went across to mainland at 9 o'clock. Camp to be pitched there. We went over with the Governor at 11, and rode up to it on donkeys, meaning to breakfast there; but as nothing had come, we returned with him and lunched at his house. At 4.30 we went back to the camp, and found all ready and the baggage up. The Governor, his Wakil, and Emanuel, dined with us, English fashion, and took leave of us. We slept in the camp, which consisted of one double tent (English) of Linant's and four single tents, given us by Egyptian Government, not very good, as they are too thin and let the sun through. There are thirty camels in all, of fair quality, and the personnel is as follows: Chippendall, Linant, and myself; Mohammad, Carl, Eugène, Osman (servants); Ali (chief of police at Suakin), two kavasses, Abd-er-Rahman and Osman, Ahmad, attendants; Musa, Arab Sherif, and eleven drivers, Bisharin. We got saddles from the Governor. Camp 1 mile W. by S. from Suakin, 50 feet above sea. Bar. (2,065) 29.59.

"*September* 11.—In camp most of the day. Camels did not come until 2 o'clock. Packed and started at 5 p.m. Marched for one hour parallel to coast across sandy plain (with stunted tamarisks), rising gently towards the hills; we then turned W. by N. and marched until 9.15 p.m. and camped (2nd camp, Handub) by a well among the first hills; water brackish and not good. Shortly after we camped two robbers were captured, who, with others, had followed us from Suakin in hopes of taking something: one, an old offender, had had both his hands cut off for previous crimes; his brother gave himself up. Camped without tents. (As they were hungry, we gave them their supper, then beat them and let them go.)

"*September* 12.—Started 6.45, and marched to 11.20 (3rd camp, Otao). Very warm morning; across plains covered with mimosas and tamarisks, between volcanic mountains. Many indications of water being below the surface, but no attempt made to dig wells. This could be made a grand country

with proper irrigation and cultivation. Little water in well at 3rd camp, and that brackish and bad; in consequence we all felt very dry. No wind except what was hot. Ther. 102 in tent; bar. 28.75. Marched at 5.30 over a high range of mountains; a steep, long road, apparently the bed of a mountain torrent. Camped at 2 a.m. (4th camp) on side of hill; no water, did not pitch tents. Bar. 27.79.

"*September* 13, *Sunday*.—Started 7.30. Marched to well at Galuchi. Reached it at 12.30 (5th camp). Marched through a very fine country—or might be made so—many bright green trees and plants, but no water visible; nothing wanted but digging wells; good as a colony. All mountains volcanic. Crossed wide circular plains, seemingly old craters long disused. Apparently an excellent climate. Why is it not developed? Only a few Bisharin, living among the rocks. They are fine-looking men, well-made, have only a white linen cloth round them, and are armed with a flattish spear, a sword and a knife. Some few have round leather shields. They are not a race to develop a country like this. When we reached Galuchi, the well was surrounded by hundreds of goats and many Arab shepherds. We got some milk which was most refreshing, as we were quite dried up. Pitched camp and stopped all night, as two of the camels had got fatigued and had to be replaced. Beautiful sunset.

"*September* 14.—Marched 7 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. through a very fine country, across beautiful plains, with signs of water below the surface everywhere. Camped close to a shady tree in the midst of a plain 7 or 8 miles wide, surrounded by lofty hills, an old crater (6th camp, Odrous). Marched 6 p.m. Camels at first very restive, and threw off their loads. At last they quieted, and we crossed another mountain range, apparently of considerable altitude, and camped at 1 a.m. close to wells with good water. Musa said he was afraid that the Arabs would come down and try to rob us, but they did not. Camp was in a narrow gorge surrounded by hills (7th camp). Bar. 26.74.

"*September* 15.—Marched 7 a.m. to 11.45 through a beautiful country, fine mountains, and many kinds

of trees, cattle, sheep, goats, and a few horses. Met Mudir of district collecting taxes, attended by twelve soldiers. His ideas of taxing probably different from ours. Passed country like yesterday with beautiful plains. Why does the Khedive do nothing with this country? Camped at Kormahi (8th camp); no water. Marched 5.30, and marched over a flat country with trees until 12.30 (9th camp). No water. Heard hyenas and jackals in the night.

"*September* 16.—Marched at 7 to 11.30 through a pretty country. Many hill-gorges and beds of streams. It must be beautiful in winter. Camped at a well in the bed of a stream, which in winter must be about 150 feet wide. (Met) Mudir. He gave us a sheep, probably stolen. The good old rule appears to prevail in this country, 'There is no law but the law of the stronger.' The Arabs are naturally in no chance of improving. England should take Sheikh Barud and make this a colony. It would do the place all the good in the world. At present the country is quite thrown away. (10th camp, Colore.) Not much water. Bar. 27.175. Stopped all day and night to rest camels. Had a quiet day in camp. Linant and Chippendall made larger filters and filtered a skinful. Camp in a pretty valley with high mountains in the distance.

"*September* 17.—Marched at 7 to 11, through low valleys; pleasant march. Camped close to a well. Good water, good-sized trees which gave shade. Did not eat in tent. Went out shooting with Chippendall at 5 o'clock; 1 hawk, 5 turtle-doves; had latter for dinner. Slept in camp. (11th camp, Matar.) Bar. 27.45.

"*September* 18.—Marched at 5 until 9, through the same sort of country as yesterday. Rested with Linant for a time. Saddle gradually giving way. 12th camp, Sabol, close to a great pile of volcanic rocks, and near a considerable pool of rain-water which had fallen last evening. Dispute between Mohammad and Ahmad before starting. Carl very unsatisfactory; he is not well, and will not allow it. He is one of the stupidest fellows I ever saw. Started at 5.45 and marched to 12 midnight. Camped (13th camp) where there was no water and stopped

for night. Rain threatened, but did not come. Bar. 27.65.

"*September* 19.—Marched at 6.45 to 2.45 (14th camp). Good water in bed of a mountain torrent. A long and hot march across volcanic plains; not much vegetation. Plenty of quartz, indications of gold and copper. Part of road steep and bad. Nice mountain valley. Fine night. Rowai. Bar. 27.84.

"*September* 20, *Sunday*.—Quiet day at Rowai to rest camels. Wrote letters, etc. Marched at 5.30 p.m. to 2.30 a.m. All sleepy and tired after two and a half hours. Passed a desert for two hours, then mountains and plains again. Camped (15th camp). No water. Fine night.

"*September* 21.—Marched 7.15 to 10.15 through hills as before. (16th camp.) No water; very hot day; slept a good deal. Marched at 5.15 to 11.15. No water. Part of way through desert. (17th camp.)

"*September* 22.—Marched 7 a.m. to 8 a.m. Found plenty of water, but not good, and salt, in wells at Obak. (18th camp.) Camped in desert; halted for the day. Very hot. Bar. 28.1. Hottest day we have had. Thermometer of Linant 47° (Réaumur). Marched at 5.30 for two hours through sand-dunes, very heavy, and then over gravelly plains till 2.30 a.m. (19th camp.) No water.

"*September* 23.—Marched 7.30 a.m. to 11 a.m. through a gravelly plain with little vegetation. No water. (20th camp, on edge of desert.) Cloudy day, not too hot. A good deal of quartz about, and indications of gold. Musa did not wish to march farther, as the camels were tired. Marched at 6 p.m. till 4.45 a.m. to some wells (21st camp). A long march principally over stony desert, and no water; occasionally a few bushes and stunted trees. I marched with Chippendall and Musa the last two hours, and got to camp an hour before the caravan, and went to sleep at once. Water not very good, rather salt. Flocks of goats at wells. Name Mahobeh.

"*September* 24.—Hard to get camel-drivers off; very lazy. Started at last at 9, and rode for two hours across desert to Berber. Much mirage, very deceptive. Went ahead of caravan with C., Linant,

and kavasses, and went to see the Wakil (Governor away at Khartum). He said that the steamer had been sent some days before to Khartum by order of the Khedive, with soldiers. Annoying. They said he had not heard we would be here so soon, and had made no arrangements. They sent us to a dirty house close to the river, but we said we preferred to camp in the desert, and he then sent us to the house of Sheikh Hamed near the town. He was very hospitable, and made us most comfortable. The Government seems to send all strangers to him to save them the trouble of keeping them. Sheikh Hamed is the head of the tribe Ababdeh, which extends from Aswan to Atbara, and is responsible for all. The elder brother who is the real head is now in prison under enquiry."

"We have an open veranda," he wrote home, "in front of the house, looking out over the Nile, and in front of that a terrace where we sleep. We have given up sleeping under cover, and coming from Suakin never thought of pitching a tent at night. In the daytime it was necessary on account of the heat of the sun. In the afternoon a lot of people generally come and have a talk, and we give them coffee. Sometimes a good many come in the morning, too, before breakfast, and look on while we are dressing. Altogether one lives pretty much in public. . . . Everyone appears to have a great respect for the Colonel, or rather "Coronel," as Gordon is always called. His name they hardly know. I hope we shall be with him before long."

So minutely were their movements scrutinized that they could not even secure privacy for prayer. "Are you a Christian?" asked a Sheikh one day. "Yes; why do you ask?" said Watson. "Well, I saw you saying your prayers, and I thought Christians never prayed."

"I enjoyed the journey very much," he told his mother, "and found the country much nicer than I expected. Some of it reminded me much of Scotland."

On September 28, the steamer *Khediveh* came down from Gondokoro, bringing Raüf Bey. "He told us that Anson and Witt had died, and that Campbell, Russell, and Linant were ill and coming back. He said that Gordon wanted more soldiers, and that we ought to go to him as soon as possible." After taking in fuel, they started on the 30th, and with many delays, caused by the difficulties of navigation and of getting wood for the furnaces, and by the "sheer laziness" of the crew, who always started late and lost time, to Watson's impatient indignation, they reached Khartum on October 6. On the voyage he wrote to his mother:

"The Nile up here is much prettier than I expected, far more so than at Cairo, as one sees no desert and the banks are always a bright green. In this part it is particularly good, and is really very like river scenery in England. In places the water is very wide and looks like a lake, and the woods on the banks are so park-like that one almost expects to see a gentleman's house. . . . I suppose, when the railway is made from Egypt, Cook's tourists, who swarm there in the season, will come up here."

A prediction that was amply verified, but not till many years later.

At Khartum one of his first duties was the melancholy one of reading the funeral service over Major Campbell, whom he had in vain removed to the Roman Catholic Convent, in the hope of saving his life by better nursing.

"It seemed strange going in uniform to a military funeral in an out-of-the-way place like this. I read the service, as there is no English clergyman here. Of course, there were very few present who could understand it, but I must say all behaved far better than I have seen Roman Catholics do at a funeral in Ireland. . . . Everyone speaks of Gordon as the

one man who can get the White Nile district into order. It is really wonderful how he seems to inspire everyone with confidence, and from what I hear he seems to work tremendously hard."

The voyage from Khartum to Gondokoro was uneventful. There were the usual stoppings for collecting wood, though Gordon was doing his best to set up fuel stations at regular intervals; and the navigation of the White Nile was difficult and intricate. They passed Fashoda on October 23, and two days later they entered Gordon's Province at the mouth of the Sobat River. At that date the Equatorial Province was a separate Government from that of Khartum.

"We are now within the limits of his authority," Watson writes. "There is a Mudir or Vice-Governor here, and some Egyptian soldiers, and the rest of the people are Shilluks, who for the most part do not trouble themselves with any clothes at all except a necklace. . . . Colonel Long, who was with Gordon, has come down, and is on his way to Khartum with letters for the Khedive. . . . He says that Gordon is very well, and is still at Gondokoro. . . . I fear my letters are very stupid, but I never was good at writing descriptions of things, as you know."

They found Gessi, Gordon's devoted Lieutenant, at Lado, and reached Gondokoro on November 14. There they met Gordon, "who did not know who we were at first." The younger man had come out with high anticipations, and he was not disappointed.

"Gordon," he tells his sister a week later, "is such a nice fellow, much what I had expected from previous report. He has not been a day ill since he came, and is always at some work or other. He is one of the most energetic men I have yet had the pleasure of meeting."

To his Mother.

"GONDOKORO,
"*November* 16, 1874.

"It is pleasant to have got up to Gordon at last, and to find him well and hard at work trying to improve the country; and he will do it if anyone can, but it is not an easy task, as you can understand. We know now in a general way what he wants us to do. He has established a station above the Cataracts, and has sent a steamer up there, and is going to send a large boat which is for the Lake (Albert Nyanza), and he wishes us after a little time to try and get there if possible. This quite agrees with our own wishes, as we both want very much to see the Lake. He has another large boat which he is going to send to the Victoria Lake, and Linant, the Frenchman who came up with us, is going there. Just at present there is work here, as he is breaking up this establishment and moving it to two others, one up and one down the river, and all the stores which are here are going down there. The amount of things which Baker brought up here is very great, but a good deal is spoilt.

"This is a large town and neatly kept—anything but the wretched place which Baker describes in his book on the Albert Nyanza. Chippendall and I will have two separate establishments, so as to be able to be independent of one another when necessary; but, of course, while we are together we shall live together, as up to the present. We have certainly a great deal to be thankful for in having had so pleasant and healthy a journey up here; so different from what the other fellows had who came here first to join Gordon.

"I do not wonder at people liking Gordon. You would if you knew him, I am sure. . . . (21st) The more I see of Gordon, the more I like him. He is very like you in some of his ideas. I am so glad we are with him, and shall be sorry when we separate, but there is no use in our all keeping together."

"I don't know what we shall do exactly yet," he adds to his sister, "though I believe we are to go to the Albert (I hope we are), and do not like speculating

on the future. It is better to take things as they come and not look too much ahead. I think we agreed on that before I left home."

There spoke Watson's simple philosophy: "Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might," was his practical motto, and "take no heed for the morrow" was the corollary. The job in hand was the only thing to tackle, and so that it was done to the best of his power he did not trouble his head much about what was coming next. It was not that he never planned or used forethought, but that he did not allow plans or hopes to interfere with what he was doing at the moment.

The time for separating and setting out on his special task came only too soon. On November 28, he left Gondokoro with Chippendall for Rejaf, with the object of exploring and surveying as far as Lake Albert Nyanza. Before leaving he received this very characteristic letter of instructions from Gordon:

Gordon to Watson.

"GONDOKORO,
"*November* 17, 1874.

"SIR,

"You will proceed to explore and survey as far as you can the countries south of Dufli. As to your proceedings up to that place, a separate memo. will direct them.

"1. There is one thing I wish to call your attention to—viz., rash adventures. I fully agree with you that the savages armed with bows and arrows are despicable enemies, and that the Arabs (*i.e.*, Egyptian soldiers) are far too timid; but there are occasions when they may become formidable enemies, especially when the sentries are so bad and negligent as those you will have will probably be. I will not enumerate these occasions, as I dare say you are as well acquainted with them as I am. You must, however, as far as possible avoid bloodshed; if pressed, then let them

understand your power. Any mishap to you would be a great annoyance to me, for, in addition to my regret for your misfortune, it would give a plausibility to the Arabs' opinion, and be a strong point in favour of their argument that large numbers of soldiers are unnecessary. Remember, too, the negro is treacherous by nature to some degree, and that he has been badly treated for many years, and *ought* to be vengeful even if they are not. Therefore, avoid rash adventures, producing no glory, but great inconvenience to me. Avoid landing in narrow places among reeds where natives can jump on boats; and though peaceably received, be ready for war at any time; for an evil report brought after your arrival might cause a timid Sheikh to do what he would never have thought of before the arrival of this report. Endeavour to get some man of the tribe among whom you are to be your chaperon to the next tribe.

" 2. Endeavour to keep the harmony with all the other Europeans out here. I have placed you all at the head of separate parties, so that there is no necessity for your being twins if you do not agree.

" 3. As for the work, I leave it for you *to decide on the spot*, with the injunction again of undertaking no rash expeditions and of not exposing your men to unnecessary hardships or want of food.

" 4. If a felucca comes up with you, I have given directions to the Engineer to put her together and give her over to you or your comrade (the Senior taking the choice, if you do not wish to go together); and in order that (you) may understand the order in which the boats are to be put together, I have given you the orders of the Engineer on this subject to read, so I need not repeat them.

" You will receive an Arabic letter with this to the Mudirs of Tetcho and Dufli, giving you power over their magazines and desiring them to give you every help.

" Yours obedtly,
" C. E. GORDON."

This was supplemented on December 2 by the following order:

"Lieutenant Watson, R.E., will consider himself in command at and in the vicinity of (Dufli) Ibrahamiyeh, and on the way up to that place from Rejaf, and also at Rejaf. Mr. Kemp will obey such orders as Lieutenant Watson may give him.

"C. E. GORDON."

Watson liked Rejaf and the country round it much better than Gondokoro; it was rather too crowded, perhaps, but most fortunately exempt from mosquitoes: you could "work at night out of doors with a light without being bitten, and that I did not think was possible anywhere on the banks of the White Nile." He was delighted with the trees and flowers, and collected seeds which he afterwards sent to the Botanic Garden at Dublin. He was busy making observations for the latitude of the town, and there was a rare and opportune transit of Venus on December 9 which he observed for the longitude.

"We were fortunate enough to get a very clear view of it," he wrote to Major (afterwards Sir Charles) Wilson, R.E., who had offered to get his observations recomputed, "and took the local time of egress as accurately as we could." "I am anxious," he added, "to get this place fixed accurately, as we propose to make it the base of any future work we may do. It is well adapted for this, better in many ways than Gondokoro. The latter place has almost disappeared, Colonel Gordon having moved his headquarters and greater part of the town (African towns are shifted without much difficulty) to a new station, Lado, a few miles lower down the river."

"Here we are with the thermometer at 94 or so in the middle of the day," he told his sister (December 13), "but we work in our shirt-sleeves and don't feel the heat. You never do when you have plenty to do, and that we have at present. For in this country, as a general rule, no one ever does anything unless he is told, unless you first show him how, and then stand by him the whole time; for, if you go, the chances are

that he will lie down and go to sleep. The Egyptians are certainly a hopeless race, and we often amuse ourselves by discussing to what it is due, whether to their religion or to natural imbecility. How the Arabs here must dislike having Gordon up here to push them about and make them work! The best people under the Government are the Egyptian negro troops, who correspond to our sepoys in India. They are infinitely better than the Arabs or 'white soldiers,' as they are called. The latter are a feeble folk, and are generally sick. We have had a very pleasant time here, and small blame to us; for it is really a nice place—hills all round, pretty park-like scenery and a fine rapid river opposite to us, plenty to eat. . . . But though we are well off, our faces are towards the south, and we look forward to a start, for this, you know, is, or at least ought to be, only the beginning of our journey. . . . Gordon has been up here these last two days, and we have had long talks. He is very fond of discussions. He is certainly not a man who runs in an ordinary groove. I wish I could describe him to you, and yet that would not be at all easy. You must know him to understand him. He is very anxious for us to get on; though professing not to care for geographical discovery, he does all the time, and I would back him to do good work in that line against any man I ever met. He has such energy and perseverance."

The time passed in preparing everything for the voyage and getting ready the transport for the iron boats which were to be put together and launched on the lakes. The place was too populated for game, and the shooting was poor—only pigeons and wild geese. Watson was picking up Arabic—afterwards so useful to him—as well as he could in the absence of any interpreter who could teach it. "There is one officer who thinks he can talk French, but I understand his Arabic better!"

A couple of characteristic letters from Gordon may come here.

Gordon to Watson.

"GONDOKORO,
"*December* 28, 1874.

"MY DEAR WATSON,

"To my surprise, the steamer No. 9 came up last night with Hasan Effendi, so I send her up with nuggar to Rigaf.

"1. Do not keep the nuggars longer than you absolutely want them, till I have sent up the sections of the iron boats, and then Coco Agha can keep one at his disposition. Tell him he must send a proper crew with felucca when he sends her, for I will give her none; it must be self-supporting.

"2. Read and give (leaving time for gum to dry on seal) my letter to M. Linant, and let Chipp. see it.

"3. It is a serious thing with Kemp. Hasan Effendi says he is one day ill and another day well. Do you think men in his condition and Linant's realize what they throw or may throw on others through their remaining? I hope you both keep well. When I come up I will bring my medical book, and let you study it; it ought to be studied with the greatest care—much more so than astronomical observations. Good-bye,

"Yours sincerely,
"C. G. GORDON."

Nevertheless, he had written a fortnight before (15th): "Thank you and Chippendall very much for the maps and observations; they will please the Khedive and Geographical Society. Thank you and Chippendall for the potter's wheel, which will enable me to make one;" and so forth, with many orders about mules and nuggars (boats).

The next letter is dated December 28, like the one quoted above. Gordon often wrote more than once to the same correspondent on the same day, as Lord Cromer later found out.

Gordon to Watson.

" . . . Think, think, think, is what I am always doing—how to remedy the delay in communicating with civilized world in a quicker way than at present.

" If that Albert Lake was only finished ! ! ! and you both were free, or if Linant had an Englishman's or German's nerve ! . . . I want to pierce to Formosa Bay, distant from Mtesa about 400 miles. A series of small powerful military posts along a constructed road would do the job, and free us from Khartum and these steamers, which I calculate scarcely make three voyages per annum—*i.e.*, 6,000 miles, about 15 miles *per diem*, taking all the year round."

Though Watson professed himself " ready to start," and set his face eagerly southwards, the fates had decreed against him. Naturally, he said nothing of illness in his letters to anxious folk at home, but even before leaving Gondokoro he and most of the party had been down with the fever of that pestilential climate. He got better, off and on, and refused to give in; but at Rejaf he grew so much worse—blank pages for some weeks in his Diary tell their own tale—that Gordon saw that it would be madness to let him go farther, in the wet season with fever on him, and ordered him (January 25, 1875) back to Lado. When he got there, Gordon had left; so he followed down the Nile and picked him up at Bor on the 31st, and the two journeyed together, Watson in the s.s. *Safia*, Gordon in the *Khediveh*, as far as Sobat, full of " discussions," Watson maintaining that he was quite well enough to go to the Lake, but Gordon fully determined that he should not risk his life; and as the man who got the worst of the argument said, Gordon was " not the man to change his mind when once he has made it up." There was, of course, no appeal against this decision, and very reluctantly he had to give up all hopes for that year of further explorations.

"Lieutenant Watson," wrote Gordon, "goes home quite broken down. His clothes hang on him as a pole. A nice agreeable fellow and a great loss to me. . . . He is a capital surveyor." So ill was he, indeed, that once when lying prostrate with fever he overheard Gordon say, "I am sending him down the Nile, but I don't think he will get to Cairo alive."

He took his disappointment philosophically, as usual, consoling himself with the reflection that there was "small chance of reaching the Lake this season" (a prediction verified by Chippendall), and cheered by the expectation of coming back later on. "We must take things as they come," he wrote home, "and I always find that things turn out for the best." So he parted from Gordon on February 9, leaving him, "I am happy to say, very well, better than he had been for some time, and hopeful as to the results of his work." He added: "Gordon was most kind about the whole affair and seemed sorry to part with me," as he might well be, for he was not likely to find an equally able assistant.

Gordon, indeed, lost in Watson more than a merely able scientific officer. Colonel Nugent, R.E., with whom the young experimenter in "torpedoes" had worked in daily intercourse, wrote truly (January 16, 1875):

"I know of nothing more salutary to a man depressed and lonely than buoyant youthful spirits, and you will have proved the greatest service to Gordon already. His last letter was much more what it should be than were his former. . . .

"I am glad for your own sake that you went when you did, because torpedo matters have in some respect languished; the cables still lie in the dock at Woolwich, and, indeed, we have been pulled up rather suddenly in our buildings by an alarm excited in the minds of some of the Controllers by the proposal to place even a small quantity of gun-cotton in or near the

premises. . . . The School of Submarine Mining does not advance, though the Inspector-General of Fortifications has been twice down, stirring them up."

However much good Watson did to Gordon, it was evident that the loss of his energy was felt at Woolwich and Chatham.

Gordon's letter to the War Office is emphatic:

"SOBAT,
"*February* 8, 1875.

"SIR,

"I have the honour to inform you, for the information of H.R.H. the Commander-in-Chief, that Lieutenant Watson's health having broken down in this climate, I have decided on sending him back to England; it is to my regret he leaves this country, but I feel convinced that it would be fatal to him to stay. Out of fourteen Europeans, I have lost four by death and six by invaliding in about eight months; so that it is not astonishing Lieutenant Watson's health should break down, he never having been before in a hot climate.

"I have every reason to be satisfied with Lieutenant Watson; he has been zealous and most painstaking in his surveys, and, as I have said, it is much to my regret he leaves me; but however much he may have wished to stay, I considered that it was not my duty to let him sacrifice his life in remaining here.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,
"Your most obedient servant,
"C. G. GORDON.

"THE DEPUTY-ADJUTANT-GENERAL, R.E."

On reaching Khartum on February 16, 1875, a choice of routes had to be made. The journey must be rapid, because Colonel Fred. Burnaby, whom Watson had picked up at the Sobat River, was near the end of his leave and was due at Cairo in forty days. It is interesting here to note that it was at Khartum that Burnaby heard of the closing of Turkistan by the Russian Government against travellers, and

immediately resolved to defy this prohibition and planned his famous ride to Khiva. The quickest route to Cairo was by Berber and Suakin, provided they caught a steamer promptly in the Red Sea—a very doubtful contingency. Besides, they had both come out by this route, and nothing could be duller than going back over the same ground. Moreover, sailing—the river was too low for steamers—from Khartum to Berber in the teeth of the north wind prevailing at that season meant delay and tedious towing. So they determined to ride the whole 600 miles from Khartum to Korosko on camels, and then take boat down the Nile to the head of the railway at Asyut. This, of course, involved crossing the Nubian desert from Abu-Hamed to Korosko, to cut off the wide bend of the Nile round Dongola.

It seemed a rather daring enterprise for a sick man, for camel-riding is not exactly luxurious; but, in spite of Gordon's forebodings, Watson had benefited so much by the voyage down to Khartum that he felt equal to anything, though he was described as little better in appearance than a bag of bones. At all events, he covered the 600 miles, including all stops, in twenty-two days, and the last and most trying part, the crossing of the Nubian desert along a track of 260 miles, marked throughout its dismal length by the cheering carcasses of dead camels, was accomplished in six and a half days, an average of 40 miles a day. In the last day of all they were fifteen hours in the saddle and covered 60 miles over very rugged ground—not bad going for a man invalided home.

He wrote an account of this great ride in 1875. It does not seem to have been published, and is too long to print here. Besides, most of the route has become familiar ground since the various Sudan campaigns, and the incidents of camel journeys are similar and monotonous. Everyone knows the delays, the pro-

crastination of the authorities who provide the camels, the trouble with the drivers and baggage, the slipping of saddles off the apex of the hump, the stupidity and brutality of kavasses—Watson's man was apparently mad, but his flint-lock pistols luckily had no flints—the dealings with the villages for food, the unvaried mimosa groves, the mirage, the passing caravans, the rough going in the nullahs. They crossed the Atbara, then nearly dry, on February 28, and next day were cordially welcomed at Berber by their friend of the way out, Sheikh Hamed, who was much disappointed, and probably thought them out of their minds, when they announced their intention of going on the next day. He at once procured them fresh camels, however, and the Khartum drivers and beasts were sent back, along with the mad kavass.

When they left Abu-Hamed for Korosko, it was bitterly cold in the desert:

" even a thick blanket was hardly enough to keep us warm. The camel-drivers shivered as they tried to draw their linen cloths more closely round them, and crouched under the lee of the camels to escape the keen blast of the piercing wind. One of the boys at last found a warmer resting-place by creeping into the carcass of a dead camel, from which the vultures had picked the flesh clean, leaving the skin stretched like a sheet of parchment over the bones."

Sand-storms made the going worse. " It is impossible to convey by any description the absolute desolation of the desert regions; day after day nothing but black rocks, sand, and heaps of camel's bones; not a blade of vegetation, not a trace of life." Yet their last night was passed in regret; none can part from the desert without a pang.

A letter to his elder sister gives a brief résumé of his journey from Rejaf to Cairo.

Watson to his Sister.

"CAIRO,
"*April* 2, 1875.

"Having been of late a regular beast in the matter of writing to you, I must try to atone to some small extent for my remissness in this matter, and the rather as your excellent letter of the 24th has this morning reached me and given me exceeding pleasure. If you can forgive me for my wickedness, pray do so, and attribute the fault to the disadvantageous circumstances under which I have been lately placed.

"And now, to become egotistical, let me say that I have had really a most pleasant journey this time, and that I now feel all right, and would be quite able to go up again and have another shot at the old Lake, if that were to the mind of Gordon; but as it wasn't, we need not discuss the matter. Historically, here is my voyage down in brief:

"January 25. Preparing to start for South; got note from G. to say 'don't.'

"26. Started in nuggar for Lado.

"27. Arrived at Lado. Gordon gone to Sobat.

"30. Started for Sobat in steamer.

"31. Caught up Gordon at Bor.

"February 7. Arrived at Sobat. Found Captain Burnaby of Horse Guards, who had come up to see the country.

"9. Started with Burnaby for Khartum in steamer.

"17. Arrived at Khartum.

"22. Started for Berber by camel.

"25. Shendy.

"March 1. Arrived at Berber.

"2. Started for Abu-Hamed by camel.

"6. Arrived Abu-Hamed.

"9. Started across desert to Korosko.

"15. Arrived at Korosko.

"17. On this day we got an open boat and made the best of our way to Aswan, or rather to the top of the first Cataract, which we reached at sunset on the 19th. The Temple of Philæ is just at this point, and I must say I have never seen anything more beautiful than the view on approaching it. I saw the scene under perhaps more advantageous circumstances than

999 persons out of a 1,000, seeing that I was coming *down* the river without having come *up* it first, which, as you can understand, made the greatest possible difference. Probably, too, not having expected anything, I was more struck with the general aspect. The sun was setting on one side with a most beautiful after-glow, and the full moon rising on the other.

"On arrival we immediately visited the temple, which certainly impressed me more than Thebes or Karnak or any of the others which we saw afterwards. The following morning we found that some friends of Burnaby's, Lord F. Cecil and wife, were alongside in a large dahabiah, being engaged in wedding touring. They asked us to breakfast and to shoot the rapids with them, which we did, sending the baggage to Aswan by camel. Going down the rapids is amusing, and the excitement of the Arab sailors immense; but I could not decide how much was real and how much put on for the benefit of the onlookers. It felt comfortable sitting down again to a table with a table-cloth on it, and to know that our travels were practically at an end and we had again reached civilization.

"Aswan attained, I immediately got a small dahabiah from the Mudir, and we started without delay down the Nile.

"22. Reached Essné.

"23. Reached Luxor at 9 a.m. There we stopped, of course, but as we could not afford more time than until sunset (as Burnaby's leave was rapidly drawing to a close), rapidity was essential. In Murray's Guide-Book it is stated that, if travellers are very quick, they may get through in three days; so we thought that seven hours ought to be enough, and, seizing donkeys, galloped off to Karnak (which is certainly a very big place), returned to the boat, had something to eat, crossed the river, took more donkeys, went to the Tombs of the Kings, Kurna, saw all the temples, the Colossi, etc., etc., were back at the boat by 5.50, and immediately started on our voyage. Thebes is certainly a wonderful place and well worth seeing, even though Cook's tourists do go there. By the way, we just missed meeting a steamer-load of them.

" 24. Reached Kiné.
" 27. Reached Girgeh.
" 29. Reached Siout (Asyut), and made fast alongside the railway.
" 30. Went to the railway, and found that the train for Cairo started, or rather was supposed to do so, at 7.30 a.m. After many delays, we got off at 8.15, proceeding until the engine burst a cylinder, which delayed us an hour fixing another. We then proceeded until the second engine also broke down, and eventually got to Cairo four hours late, and were soon established in Shepheard's Hotel, which presented a very different aspect to what it did when I was here last, as now it is nearly full, while then we were almost the only inhabitants."

He was received by the Khedive at Abdin Palace on April 3; sailed from Alexandria on the 12th for Venice, where he spent a few days; and then, going by way of Florence, Pisa, Genoa, Monte Carlo, and Paris, reached London on May Day.

The scientific results of his survey of part of the White Nile were published in the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, 1879, with the title " Notes to accompany a Traverse Survey of the White Nile from Khartum to Regaf, 1874, by Lieutenant C. M. Watson, R.E.; together with Results of Astronomical Observations calculated by William Ellis, F.R.A.S., of the Royal Observatory, Greenwich; Report on the Calculation of Heights, by Richard Strachan, Meteorological Officer, and the Meteorological Observations taken by Lieutenant Watson. With a Map." A reference to this paper will show the elaboration and, considering the means and instruments at his disposal, the precision of his observations; but a brief account of the object and method of this survey is all that need be given here.*

* For this estimate of Watson's survey I am indebted to Major H. G. Lyons, R.E., D.Sc., Assistant-Director of the Science Museum, South Kensington, who was for many years Director-General of Surveys in Egypt, and is our greatest authority on the subject.

From the time of the expeditions sent by Mohammed Ali in 1840-41 to discover the sources of the Nile, the course of the Bahr-el-Jebel and the White Nile had been determined with gradually increasing accuracy by the labours of a succession of travellers, missionaries, and traders, and a large amount of information concerning the river and the country through which it flowed had been accumulated. But the outcome of these geographical studies was that the map of the Upper Nile which could be produced from them was only reasonably accurate on a small scale. On his departure from Khartum, Watson arrived at a more systematic survey of the river's course. A 4-inch prismatic compass was placed in that part of the steamer where it was found to be least affected by the iron of the vessel, and the bearing of the vessel was taken at each change of its course. The rate of steaming was obtained by means of observing the time taken for a given length on the deck of the steamer to pass any selected mark on the bank. In the Bahr-el-Jebel, which meanders greatly, this method was not quite successful, since the river is usually but 100 to 160 yards wide; in the White Nile, where the course of the river is straight for long distances, the average speed of the vessels could be readily determined.

In this way the course of the river was observed and plotted to form, when controlled by the astronomical observations which he took at every stopping-place, a valuable map of this part of the Nile, which at once superseded the earlier compilations and remained the standard map until after the reconquest of the Sudan and the reopening of the Upper Nile Regions. In 1901 and 1903 the Bahr-el-Jebel was again surveyed by similar methods, though under more favourable circumstances, and the close agreement between these two surveys, made at an interval

of thirty years, not only confirmed the accuracy of Watson's early work, but afforded valuable information on the general permanence of the river channel.* At some points, such as between Bor and Mongolla, discrepancies between the two surveys were due to the main channel of 1874 having become of secondary importance, the river having by 1901 widened and deepened an alternative branch which was not passable in 1874. More accurate and detailed work has now replaced both these earlier traverse surveys, but Watson's work was as well done as the means at his disposal permitted, and remained a reliable representation of a portion of the Upper Nile until the need and opportunity for a more detailed study arose.

Besides the survey, he made careful meteorological observations during October, November, and December on his journey from Khartum to Rejaf; and when passing the junction of the Sobat with the Bahr-el-Abyad, he took advantage of a short stoppage for replenishing the steamer's supply of wood to measure the volume discharged by the Sobat River on October 25, and found it to be 910 cubic metres per second. Bearing in mind the shortness of his stay and the state of his health, the amount of valuable work achieved is remarkable, and speaks well for his persevering energy and his scientific training.

* H. G. Lyons, "Physiography of the River Nile and its Basin," Survey Department, Cairo, 1906. Plate IX.

CHAPTER V

WITH SIR LINTORN SIMMONS AT THE WAR OFFICE (1875-1880)

WATSON undoubtedly expected to go back to the Sudan after the expiry of the six months' leave which was granted him on his return from Egypt in May, 1875.

Gordon's letter of January 26 to Rejaf had only begged him " to give up *for the moment* "—the words were underlined—" your going to the South," and added, " I hope you will get all right, for I should be sorry if you did not see the dénouement." The meetings soon afterwards down the Nile must have convinced him that Watson was not then strong enough for the climate, but for the next three years the younger man held himself in readiness for the expected call to the East. He worked hard at Arabic, took lessons from no less a teacher than the noted scholar Rizk-Allah Hassun, and even published an Arabic Vocabulary—all this with the fixed object of qualifying himself for service in the Sudan. Little as he says about his Chief in his letters, and less still in his Diary, he had come very strongly under Gordon's peculiar glamour. He confesses he cannot describe him; and, pen-tied as he always was, never is he more exasperatingly silent than about his relations with this magnetic personality. That there were difficulties in working with Gordon is well known, and the following letters from Chippendall show some of these:

Chippendall to Watson.

"STATION KERRIE,
June 10, 1875.

". . . I do wish I could get away by myself again, for really sometimes I think I shall have a row with Gordon; for though he has such a lot of anxiety and worry, he has no right to nag and worry you in return for it. Oh! and how he bores me night after night about the levels and the distances! I should not mind if he would have one good night of it and settle it; but every night to discuss whether Baker's levels are right; whether the distance is this or that, what you think; then, if you give an opinion, to be nailed at once, and your reasons asked and worried at, till out of sheer fag you agree to any proposition he likes to put forward. This is what worries me. I am too young to be a companion to Gordon, and can't agree or sympathize with him in all things. Again, he won't give you orders to do such and such things, and yet if they are not done he is angry. You must remember at Rejaf how he worried us and we nearly resigned. Well, I feel now that the least spark may cause an explosion, for I am full to overflowing. Still, it may pass off, for afterwards he always says he is sorry to have worried one so. I hope it may, for I should be a great loser should I quarrel with him. . . . I do feel in such an awkward position. Gordon treats one so much as an equal, and then one has to be so careful not to forget he is one's superior officer, that really I often feel quite mad. It is not right of him; he ought to keep one more at arm's length, because one is nearly certain some day or other to treat him as an equal, and then there will be a row. You know, old fellow, what the idea is, don't you? At any rate, try and understand my feelings, and if I unfortunately have a row with Gordon, don't you also condemn me unheard. . . ."

"KERRIE,
"*June* 26, 1875.

". . . It would look like desertion to leave Gordon toiling alone out here, although he really won't let me do anything. He seems always to think that

nobody but his blessed self can even screw a box-lid on. He is a fearful egotist in that way. But he is devilish kind to one, and really I fear he will almost spoil me for future service. . . ."

"LADO,
"*July* 25, 1875.

" . . . I cannot tell you my sorrow at leaving Gordon, for with all his faults one can't help but love him. But I should only have been a nuisance to him, for he would have nursed me, or I should have died; and so by going away I free him from an encumbrance. As for surveying that Lake, you know I never professed to care one rap about it, and simply regarded it as work to be done. What I sorrow for is leaving him *all alone;* should he be ill, there is no one to do anything for him."

Chippendall had broken down in health, like Watson, and Gordon sent him home. These letters give some idea of the irritating fascination of the man. More may be gathered from Gordon's own letters to Watson, hitherto unpublished, which add a little to the view he presents to his family in Dr. Birkbeck Hill's "Colonel Gordon in Central Africa" (1881). He naturally wrote to his former assistant as to one who 'knew all the ropes," and his letters are marked by a frankness and vigour which are scarcely exceeded in the famous "Journal at Khartum." As, however, I am not writing Gordon's life, the following extracts are chosen chiefly for their bearing on my proper subject, as showing something of Watson's Sudan experiences, though I have not refrained from quoting passages which illustrate the character of the man who stood for so much in Watson's thoughts. For several years, until his resignation of his Governorship of the Sudan in 1879, Gordon looked to Watson for every kind of help and information, and the letters show that he did not look in vain.

Gordon to Watson.

"LADO,
"*June* 25, 1875.

"MY DEAR WATSON,

"I am furious with you for (1) not having studied the levels of Gondokoro and Dufli and shown me that there was a probability of the river being navigable, or might be in steps; and (2) for purloining my proportional compasses. Never mind. Give the latter to Enderby (Colonel E. Gordon, his brother) as a reward for much trouble. I hope you are all right again. Chipp. has told you all the news. Kerrie is 34 miles south of Asua and 40 miles from good part of river to south. I came down here from Kerrie in nine and a half hours. I know you will be sorry to have left, but should not be so, for, agreeable as it all may seem to you, you would never have lived through the various long gaps of delay. Now I have been here for fourteen days, and do you know that since you left not one of the mass of steamers except *Tell-el-Hoween* has appeared once up here. . . . You know at Sobat I expected Raouf Pasha, and wrote to Gessi. . . . What does Gessi do? Though he had a telegraph to Cairo and could ask about Raouf P.—why, he keeps the steamers, and now if they do come they are in for the rains, the very thing I wished to avoid. You give a man £10 a month to obey orders; when you give him £40 you expect him to use his sense and to act up to orders, according to altered circumstances which may have occurred since issue of orders. He is a nice fellow, and I could pinch him! However, I am applying the balm of Gilead. . . . Stone sent me up as interpreters two young creatures; one went back at once ill, the other is with Chipp. at Kerrie; cannot speak English, and to everything says 'Of course, of course' in a gentle way, as much to imply you are an ass to attempt to give him directions. Now, as he says this before he knows what you are going to say, you will grant it is hard to bear with. One knows one is a fool, but there are other ways of being told it. . . .

"Marcopoli is angry, and with reason, at being written about by Burnaby in *Times*, for it does him harm. If you see or hear from Burnaby, tell him

that it is on the understood ground that he ceases this sort of correspondence and limits it to descriptions of country and *dead objects*, etc., and that he will not write again after he leaves, that I accept his presence. I am going to refuse Stanley leave to stay in Province. I object to being daily logged. No one can like it.

" Chipp. is all right; sometimes rather dull and says he takes no interest, to which I reply, giving moral quinine, ' Why did you come ?' He is forgetful, but better than he was. Poor fellow ! he has, like me, had a precious dull fortnight of it. . . . I have dressed Chipp. in my uniform on State occasions. He is not near as scientific as you were. . . .

" Tell Gallwey, if you see him, his education at Chatham is not half practical enough, and we learnt more in a year of useful things than his *élèves* do in three years. They may know more theoretically, but not practically. I do not believe in all those lectures and science departments; it is practical work one wants and good, quick memories. The clever fellows at Royal Military Academy never beat the men of the latter class. You find the former generally in some snug civil appointment in after-life; their sedentary habits stick to them. Wolseley is infinitely better Engineer than many in our Corps; and yet we grasp at everything—because others do is no reason for our so acting. I say Chipp. is a very good officer, and we have perhaps not many better, for he is strong, hardworking, and got a good determination; but if serving with Wolseley, the latter could give him many a hint, and these hints we should not want from outsiders. . . .

" By dint of drafting men down to Fashoda (not being allowed the honour of serving here) I have broken the habit to a great measure of going bodily to bed when on sentry, but there is still much to be done. . . .

" To go back to your health; it is delay, like what I am undergoing now, which is so hurtful. If one could go straight on then I believe it would be easier to keep one's health; but, as you know, this country is one of delay, even with Europeans. You find men who seem to lose their ordinary senses. . . .

" (Postscript) LADO,
" *July* 4, 1875.

" . . . I feel quite sure you will rejoice to hear that chaos ceases to exist in the magazines here. I have worked hard at it, and now each tar-tin, soap-tin, oil-tin block is with its brothers, and you no longer find a bullet-mould in with a mass of beads, screw-drivers, magnets, needles and thread; tents have their poles and mallets; and though it is pain and grief to the storekeepers, things are in a certain order. I had, of course, to do it myself. . . . The fact was, it was no agreeable task to do for anyone; for if your back was turned, away went a *spécialité* wrench in with a heap of screws. S. Effendi is sent off to Cairo with orders never to show up here again—useless, feeble creature. . . . Someone (did you ?) has taken away or hidden the collar which fits on Norton tubes and in which the monkey sticks, and I am miserable. How wretchedly ignorant we are in practical things ! What is the advantage of material soft soap over hard soap (not usual soft soap) ? what is the advantage of using linseed oil in paint ? and how (oh dear ! this is bad !) do you make paint ? . . . You will have leisure now. Why not do something for the Corps ? Write us a little book on soldering metals, on making paint or cement for metals, on tinsmith's work, on preserving woods, on brush-making, on removing rocks by dynamite, etc., etc. Write it for the Colonies where you have to use makeshifts. Just as I wrote these last words I went out to see what order the R.E. yard was in, whether the old iron had been heaped, etc., and there under an iron door I spied my (here sketch of Norton collar); it has caused me great joy. . . . You know the value of large needles. A packet was discovered among the sal ammoniac the other day, and distributed ! . . ."

He notes what a pleasure it is to an incompetent Egyptian, who has lost an important fitting, to find something else, which he takes from another machine, which will " do as well." He goes on to tell how S. Effendi was ordered to pitch the divan tent to see if the poles fitted, and as not one of them did, he was

removed from this charge and set over the corn magazine, where Gordon caught him out cheating over the store of durra.

" So I cut my friend of a month's pay for false return —viz., £18—which more than paid for the missing durra. Altogether there is a universal wish for the steamers to come to be rid of me . . . Bear in mind the great maxims, ' Never do to-day what you can put off till to-morrow,' ' Never let your duty interfere with your pleasure.' P.S.—How is your climate ?"

Gordon's ironic sense of humour carried him triumphantly through endless worries which would have been the death of a dry pragmatical official. These extracts from a twenty-four-page letter show exactly the kind of annoyance to which Watson himself had been exposed during his stay in the Sudan, but of which he says not a word in his own letters, probably because he thought them unimportant. The account of tidying up the magazines is obviously pointed at his own habits of meticulous neatness and order; there never was a tidier study or tool-house than his, and he hated not to find things in their proper places. In the next letter (July 11) Gordon is still anxious about his paint. " Let me know—and you will learn also, I expect—what is a dryer in paint ? Turps is, I think. How screws are designated in trade ? when does a nail become a spike ?" He adds that Chippendall has been

"seedy, but is better, though very weak. If he continues ailing I shall send him home in despite of the loss of his service for the exploration of the Lake. This country is not one for young men, and I would not like the responsibility of retaining him. I think it needs the constant occupation which falls to my lot to keep a man well. These five weeks lately passed in inaction must tell on a man. You know what it was at Rejaf, and Kerrie is not much better."

Chippendall was back in London in October. No man worked his assistants harder than Gordon, but the work did not kill them, if the climate did. When they were ill, none was more considerate.

Gordon was home in England for a brief visit at the beginning of 1877. He and Watson saw each other daily in January, and the friendship begun two years before was closely cemented. Gordon evidently relied a good deal on Watson's judgment, for on January 30 there is the significant entry in the Diary: "Gordon came in after breakfast. . . . Dined at Club. Gordon and (Gerald) Graham. Much talk about Sudan. Gordon promised not to go up country unless he got the Sudan." He had resigned his thankless Governorship of the Equatorial Province at the end of 1876, realizing that it could not be worked apart from the rest of the Sudan, where his reforms were consistently frustrated by the Egyptian Governors; but the Khedive was most anxious for him to return, and by making him Governor-General of the whole Sudan, as well as the Equatorial Province and Darfur, overcame his objections. This is the meaning of the entry in the Diary. "I am delighted," wrote Graham to Watson (February 11), "that our plans have been successful, and that he now really is Governor-General of the Sudan from the Cataract to the Equator." On the following day (January 31) Gordon left for Egypt, seen off by Watson. "You are a kind fellow," he wrote from Paris on February 1, "coming and waiting to see me off." He still hoped to get him out again. "When I see my way, I will ask you to join me," he wrote (June 22), when thanking him for the map of the White Nile with which Watson had been very busy. "The map is first-rate, and also the notes of how it was compiled are satisfactory." Gordon had heard at Massowah on March 1 that

" the whole of Darfur had risen in revolt, owing to bad government. I therefore hurried on from Khartum to this (Umchanga, Darfur), having sent on a body of 2,600 troops ahead of me to relieve Fasher . . . which is still hampered. You never saw such a country, a mere desert, wanting in everything, and utterly worthless. The Bashi-Bozuks had driven the people wild by their exactions."

The story of how he rode alone into Dara and subdued the revolt by his mere personal ascendancy has been told in his published letters. He tells it again to Watson, but the only passage that bears upon the question of the latter's employment is a postscript from Obeid, in Kordofan, dated October 3, 1877: " Thanks for the R.G. Society papers. When I see my way to employ other officers I will do so. Now it is of no use." In February, 1878, he asks Watson to advise him about putting up a telephone service in the Equatorial Province; and presently he is in Cairo, which (March 16)

" I hate most cordially, and am, indeed, very low-spirited at the state of Egypt. As the Government have interfered, there is an end to my duties, and I am glad of it. I wish I was out of Egypt and out of the Sudan. The government of Sudan is nothing to what passes here. . . . I should not stay in Egypt if anything happened to H.H." (the Khedive Ismail). " You know, my dear Watson," he wrote on July 25, 1878, " you have often said you would like to come out, but how can I ask you, when on your arrival at Cairo you may find me deposed? Now this is on the cards any day. . . . My position is so precarious that I cannot take an assistant."

Again, October 30: " Do not be rash, till you see how things are likely to turn out."

It was not, in fact, till Watson had accepted the post of Aide-de-Camp to General Simmons that the idea of going out again to Africa was practically abandoned.

"I am somewhat relieved," wrote Gordon from Khartum, November 14, 1878, "that you have taken the A.D.C., though it is a loss to me. This country is a pest-house; the people have been dying like flies, and my belief is that Europeans cannot live here. You are sure to get on, and I feel certain you will have a fine career. These countries are not for such men as you are; they are more for the brigand class."

He did not himself stay there much longer. He kept his resolve not to go on with the Sudan Government, except under Ismail, and when this Khedive was deposed in July, 1879, he resigned. Writing from Abyssinia, October 12, he makes an appeal to Watson:

"You must not get into the habit of writing letters like X. and Z., which have no meat in them. I want *meat* in this country. . . . I hope to see you soon, say in January, and will talk over all affairs. Do not be angry with me for saying I want *meat* in letters; but when I see your clear handwriting, your letter is picked out and read, and I do not care about Royal Commissions. No Commission ever did anything."

There was undoubtedly plenty of "meat" in Gordon's own correspondence with Watson, which had become voluminous since their meeting in London in January, 1877, and it is easy to understand that this amazingly candid writer wanted more personal expression than Watson was able to put in his rather formal letters. Indeed, one is constantly clamouring for more bread, when our Pasha deals out epistolary stones. He was, however, quite conscious of his defects as a letter-writer. "I wish I could write nicer letters," he confessed, "but it is not my way, you know, and it never does to try what does not come natural." There is no use grumbling because a man of many brilliant talents lacked this one.

It is necessary to bear in mind this constant

correspondence with Gordon, not only because the intercourse between the two remained long afterwards in the front of Watson's mind, but because it must have had a considerable effect upon his plans. In April, 1877, he was consulting Colonel Nugent at the War Office "about getting leave to go to Gordon," and the subject was renewed as late as September, 1878. "It is curious," he tells his mother, "considering the disagreeabilities of the Lake District, what a fascination it has for anyone who has been there." His letters at this time are full of Gordon's movements and plans. Nothing interested him so much. When a man has set his heart upon a special kind of work, and is perpetually hoping and even expecting to be called to it, the suspense and uncertainty must tell upon his career. He cannot settle down definitely to another kind of work. Probably Watson was much less upset by the suspense than the majority of men would have been. He had a great power of concentrating on the work in hand, and not letting himself be distracted by thoughts of the other work that he wished for. But even he could not be the better for such enforced "halting between two opinions."

However, he had six months' leave in which to recover his health and arrange his plans. After seeing his old friends at the War Office, Woolwich, and Chatham, attending the meeting of the Royal Geographical Society (of which he was presently elected a Fellow), consulting Sir Henry Rawlinson and Sir Bartle Frere, preparing the map of the White Nile, visiting Gordon's sister at Southampton, dining with Burnaby at the Marlborough Club, and, of course, staying with his people in Dublin, he spent six months with his mother and elder sister on the Continent, chiefly in Switzerland and down the Rhine and afterwards, greatly daring, he faced his fair friends in

county Cork, where he was welcomed with enthusiasm ("All is as of old," he notes), and, much to his advantage, was made to play lawn-tennis, which had asserted its supremacy during his absence in Africa, instead of croquet. In September he crossed to Glasgow and toured about the West Coast of Scotland and the Hebrides, specially enjoying Skye and Stornoway. In October he was back in London, busy with his maps for Gordon, and as his leave drew to an end the next official step had to be seriously considered.

There are, of course, various eligible openings for a talented Royal Engineer, and at first Watson was inclined to join the Ordnance Survey. His name was put down for it, and as an alternative it was suggested that he should triangulate Cape Colony and the Orange River; but finally, in November, he was attached to the office of the Inspector-General of Fortifications at the War Office for work on the defence of London. It was the happiest lot that could have fallen to him, since Gordon and the Sudan were denied; and even if a return to the Nile had been possible, it may be doubted whether he would not have lost more than he gained. There would, it is true, have been the excitements and the risks of exploration, and the satisfaction of accomplishing original scientific work for which he was specially qualified and in which he delighted; but, on the other hand, he would have lost the inestimable benefit of a singularly wise and judicious Chief. Gordon had great qualities, but no one has credited him with a calm, well-balanced judgment; he was a difficult and erratic leader to follow. In Sir Lintorn Simmons, the Inspector-General, Watson found exactly the right antidote to Gordon's enthusiastic impetuosity. Kindly, broad-minded, tolerant, but immovably firm and a demon to work, a man of the world in the best sense, ripe in experience, a clear judge of men, Sir

Lintorn Simmons set an example of laborious energy and level-headed governance which had a splendid influence upon all who served under him. He, too, knew the East, for he had played his part in the Crimean War as Intelligence Officer in Omar Pasha's Army, and his sympathy with Watson's Eastern interests, joined to unfailing kindness, consideration, and understanding, made him an ideal Chief.

Few men were less under the influence of others than Watson. He chose his own way, where choice was possible, with little reference to the advice of others. Not that he was above asking advice on matters which were outside his own experience; in such cases he was always ready to consult those who knew, and to follow their counsel with modest deference; but when it came to dealing with affairs which he was competent to decide, he asked no man's opinion. He called himself "obstinate," and he certainly was self-reliant and independent in his decisions. But no man can serve under a powerful, dominant Chief for several years without feeling his influence in the formation of character. It is true that Watson was a man over thirty years of age when he joined the Inspector-General at the War Office, though he had worked under him before at Chatham and visited often at his house at Woolwich. But it is a psychological error to hold, as many do, that a man's character is invariably "formed" at thirty, or at any age. Character grows insensibly under every influence, and to say that a man's mental and moral attitude towards life is "fixed" once for all at any time is to deny him the essential quality of life, which is motion, change, development. However little Watson may have appeared to alter during his five years under Sir Lintorn Simmons, he would himself have admitted gratefully that under his experienced Chief he had learnt many lessons in dealing with men

and affairs. The very qualities he brought with him to his new work, single-minded devotion to duty, love of hard and accurate work, and courageous loyalty to the exact truth, he found embodied in his official Chief, and seeing them in active exercise necessarily strengthened them in himself. However firmly a man's principles may seem to be rooted, they will only grip the more tenaciously by daily association with a leader of the same bent of character; and, contrariwise, daily association with a lower and opposing nature may easily weaken even a strong man's hold of the higher principles with which he started. Those years with Sir Lintorn Simmons helped sensibly to make our Pasha the man we admired.

The work he was set to do had, indeed, little of the fascination which, as he said, drew him towards Equatorial Africa; but Watson had the invaluable gift of finding interest in everything. To him nothing in the way of work was "common or unclean," and there was much in his official duties which attracted him. The War Office Committee on the Defence of London, for which he had to prepare plans and reports throughout 1876-1878, is now an old story, and recent developments in the means and methods of warfare have probably long cast its labours into the limbo of antiquities; but the risk of invasion, however problematical, has not been diminished by the substitution of an avowed for a merely conjectural enemy. Watson's responsible and confidential duties took him all over the Home Counties, surveying and planning the defences of the capital, and to one who enjoyed exercise and travel as he did, these official tours to examine the defensive terrain were pleasure trips. His surveys, however, were not confined to the defences of London. The War Office required reports on foreign defences, and he visited the forts

of Cherbourg and Brest in July, 1876, and the great eastern frontier fortresses of France, Verdun (now immortal by its glorious defence) and Toul, and "planned all the forts," in October, 1879, and was duly thanked by the Secretary of State for his detailed reports. His work was fully recognized by the War Office, which is not so slow to appreciate talent as is sometimes supposed, and he was appointed Secretary to the Siege Operations Committee in March, 1877. The duties connected with these two Service Committees were enough to keep the most laborious man fairly busy; but in addition to these he was still actively employed in planning the defence, partly by submarine mines, of the commercial harbours and coaling stations of Great Britain and Australia, for his experience in "torpedoes" had not been forgotten.

There was another subject on which, in the absence of any officer specially designated at the War Office, he was the accepted, though unofficial, referee. This was military ballooning, in which, as we have seen, he had experimented before he went to Central Africa. This branch of research had been taken up and developed with signal success by Captain (now Colonel) James Templer, between whom and Watson a warm, enduring friendship sprang up. The two worked together in perfect unanimity, and Watson's influence at the War Office was invaluable in carrying through, as far as possible, Templer's plans for the development of military aircraft. In the summer and autumn of 1878 the two were very busy together. "May 7, Captain Templer came to my office to speak about balloons," is the first entry on the subject in the Diary. From that date there were almost daily consultations throughout May, and the scientific aid of Abel and Noble, the leading authorities on explosives, was called in for the problem of economical gas-production. On July 1 Watson was at Woolwich for

the R.E. Balloon Committee, with Noble and Templer. On July 3 he made an ascent in the balloon "Excelsior," coming down at Ardingly in Sussex. All July he was hard at work at Woolwich at the gas apparatus, furnace, envelope, etc., of balloons. "July 17, finished gore of balloons and cut it out," says the Diary. In August balloons were "getting on well," and on the 23rd he and Templer saw "Pioneer" filled with gas for the first time, as well as the latter's private balloon "Crusader," and made an ascent from Woolwich.

This ascent was reported in *The Times* of August 24:

"Yesterday afternoon the military balloon experiments were continued at the Royal Arsenal, Woolwich, and a free ascent was made with the larger balloon to test some new instruments as well as to ascertain the power a silken balloon possesses of retaining gas in an elevated atmosphere for a considerable length of time. Captain Templer's large balloon, the 'Crusader,' was employed, his smaller one, the 'Pioneer,' being unable to carry more than one person, and therefore unsuited for the purpose required. Mr. Wright, the Crystal Palace aeronaut, and several balloonists assisted in the preparations, and the balloon was filled with 25,000 cubic feet of gas by Mr. Hay, the Inspector of Machinery to the War Department, from the gasworks in the Royal Arsenal. Captain Watson, R.E., who has made the application of ballooning to military purposes his especial study, and has previously ascended with Captain Templer, was in the car yesterday, together with Mr. Apsley Pellatt, who has before made ascents for the advantage of the Service. Captain Templer has recently been perfecting a system of passing over certain places and descending at prearranged stations, which will probably be turned to advantage in future campaigns. By studying the wind and the point of departure he has been enabled to calculate very nearly the course his balloon would pursue, and on Tuesday last, when he ascended from the Crystal Palace with Captain Lee of the Royal Engineers, he stated his

intention of going to Aldershot, a proposal which he literally carried out by bringing his balloon to ground in the camp. A system of directing the balloon to favourable positions by a rope attached to a waggon drawn by horses has also been tried with success, and all the details of passing through forests, over rivers and under bridges, have been ingeniously provided for. This branch of aeronautics will probably be tested during the present experiments. A start was made yesterday afternoon at about 4 o'clock in favourable weather, and the balloon proceeded in a south-westerly direction. Not long after it ascended it passed through one of the many storms which have lately been so prevalent. The preparation of hydrogen gas for the smaller balloon is proceeding, and considerable difference of opinion prevails as to the power of the balloon to retain so volatile a gas sufficiently long to be of any practical use."

The *Daily Telegraph* on the same day published an interesting article on the experiments, which is worth reprinting:

"Experiments with war balloons will be continued at Woolwich for several months. A select Balloon Committee has been appointed, consisting of Colonel Nugent, R.E., Professor Abel, Chemical Department, Royal Arsenal, Colonel Noble, Director of Works, and Lieutenant Watson, R.E., who have instructions to report the result of the experiments to the War Department. Amongst the recent improvements in the construction of balloons is a stronger fabric than formerly used, the tear and strain of captive balloons being very great. A steel wire cable is fixed to the network of a captive balloon and terminates on the ground. This cable is insulated, and the telephone will be used as a means of communication between the surveying officers and the Balloon Committee on terra firma. The 'Crusader' ascended yesterday, with a lifting power of 1,400 pounds. The cable, which gives 200 yards to 100 pounds in weight, will bear a strain of 22 tons. Great progress has also been made in balloon instruments. There are telescopes which command a 12 mile range, a vane which

indicates the direction the balloon is going, a lamp which will burn in safety in hydrogen gas, and a pocket aneroid to indicate the exact altitude of the balloon. Another point of progress is a strategical one, enabling Engineer officers to leave a besieged city in a balloon, and to return to it again. Assuming that London was besieged with an enemy 20 miles round, and the General Commanding says to the aeronaut officers, 'Take this despatch to York and return with five field telegraphists,' the message would be conveyed as follows: The war balloon would leave at a high altitude in the usual way. If the wind happened to be south the descent would be made, say, at Leicester, and an Aide-de-Camp would take the despatch by the first or a special train to York. The balloon, uninflated, would then be taken by a circuitous route to, say, Brighton, and be inflated at the nearest gasworks, when the south wind would take it and the field telegraphists into London. If a person in future should want to be conveyed out of a besieged city, or a newspaper correspondent to enter it, they would be enabled to do so at the cost of about £100. Another important improvement is a beautifully arranged system of balloon signals. Before the experiments at Woolwich are completed, five captive balloons will float at one time over London, at distances of five miles, and converse by signals with the greatest ease; and if the order is given for a balloon at Woolwich to proceed afloat, regardless of wind, to Aldershot, it would be done by attaching the earth end of the steel cable to a traction engine, railway engine, or a military waggon, the same cable having a pipe attached to a travelling gas-making apparatus to keep the balloon afloat any number of hours or days. The 'Crusader' has already been removed afloat 2 miles in this way. In addition to war balloons built for various degrees of altitude, it is proposed to have a sea class of balloons for use in naval warfare, with a telephone and gas-making apparatus (steam passing through iron filings), upon a steamer below, with subsidiary steamers to convey information to the Admiral of the Fleet. The 'Crusader' yesterday made a free ascent with Captain Templer and two others in it; but on a subsequent day it will remain

captive, and Her Majesty's troops stationed at Woolwich will turn out in various directions within an area of 30 square miles, and the surveying officers in the observatory balloon, possessing a vision unobstructed by hills, woods, buildings, etc., will have to furnish information to decide the best tactical and strategic disposition of the troops, and by means of field-glasses to spy out masked batteries, ambuscades, entrenchments, and outworks, to calculate the limits of the surrounding woods, and the relative position, distance, and number of the surrounding troops. They will have to photograph the surrounding country and exercise the greatest vigilance and presence of mind to prevent military surprises and provide against disaster. They will have to keep the General Commanding informed of the assembly and attack of troops, the advance of the guns, mustering of cavalry, down to an Aide-de-Camp being taken prisoner. The experiments will be made in the presence of the Select Committee, several of whom were present yesterday. If their report is satisfactory war balloons will be adopted into the Service, balloon trains established and officers of the Engineers instructed in their use."

On September 11 Watson again ascended with Templer at Woolwich in "Crusader" and came down at Ilford. There were still troubles with the generating apparatus and with the varnishing of the envelope, and his inventive talent proved of the greatest service in all the details of manufacture. He wrote an official report on the progress so far achieved, and then on October 15 he had to lay aside the more active share in the work on taking up his new duties as Aide-de-Camp to Sir Lintorn Simmons. Ten years later, however, in April, 1888, he was appointed Officer in Charge of Balloons at Chatham, whither the ballooning section had been removed from Woolwich in 1882, an appointment which he held till he returned to the War Office in September, 1889, when he was succeeded by his friend (then Major) Templer.

Watson compiled a clear and authoritative history of military ballooning in England, on which Colonel Templer wrote to him: "I think it was very good. You make too much of me altogether; that is the only fault." Watson naturally does not mention his own share in the work, for no one despised self-advertisement more heartily, or was more ignorant of the art of "pushing" himself. But Colonel Templer, going to the opposite extreme, in conversation with myself, was generously eager to give his friend the chief credit for everything that was accomplished, and tried to sink himself into the background. Templer's name, however, is too closely connected with every step in advance in the science of war ballooning since 1878 for any mistake to be made as to his immense services, which were joined to an enthusiasm and a persevering energy that would have achieved far greater results if he had been properly supported by the Government. Even such meagre financial aid as the Balloon Section at first obtained (£150!) was largely due to Watson's influence at the War Office, and it was through his mediation that Templer was able to secure the services of Colonel Cody in teaching a whole generation of airmen.

But beyond this, Colonel Templer assured me that his friend's mathematical genius and practical inventiveness were invaluable in the experimental stages. There was nothing, he said, in the ballooning line that Watson did not know or foresee. His calculations and theories were bold and ingenious; he had extraordinary prescience, foretold the immense importance of aircraft in war, and the perfection of the motor power which was to complete their efficiency. All Watson's apparatus was still in full use, and the big airship "Nulli Secundus" had been built on his lines as much as on Colonel Templer's own, when the whole business was handed over to the Admiralty

by Mr. Haldane during Mr. Winston Churchill's tenure of the office of First Lord. Had Watson's plans been carried out, he added, England would have had a fleet of airships able to bombard Berlin and make the Great War impossible. Not only did the Government refuse to encourage the building of aircraft, but, with preposterous generosity, it exhibited our own models and inventions to the trained eyes of German experts,* in spite of Watson's energetic protests, and even allowed the Germans to copy and take over all improvements after the Boer War. Zeppelins are, in fact, the direct result of the Government's throwing over Watson's and Templer's plans, and letting the Germans work from the English patterns. We were about to become the leading country in aircraft, said Colonel Templer, when the whole of the work accomplished was abandoned and thrown to our enemies, so that when the Great War began we had nothing to fight with in the air.

The series of letters written by Colonel Templer to his friend from 1878 to 1902 confirm this loyal testimony to Watson's services to military ballooning, but to quote them would only be repeating what is said above. A few extracts, however, will illustrate the early phases of military airships and the close co-operation of the two friends.

Templer to Watson.

"THE BARRACKS, BARNET,
"*June* 27, 1878.

" . . . I have a letter to meet Colonel Noble at the Royal Arsenal on Monday at 11.30. I shall be there.

"I made a wonderful ascent from the Crystal Palace last evening at 6 p.m. In the morning I told

* It is only fair to state that the Germans allowed Watson to inspect their Balloon Establishment at Schöneberg in 1890, but at that date the international danger had not become acute.

my Colonel and brother-officers that I would ascend from the Crystal Palace at 6 o'clock and bring the balloon down on the barrack ground at 7.30, and be at the mess at eight—and I did it. I made some good observations and found our camp in the field glass on a rather hazy day when I crossed the Thames 12 miles distant. I think this is the most encouraging ascent I ever made."

In another letter, undated, he says: "When can you come for two days? I inflated the little balloon 'Pioneer' yesterday; she is quite true, and apparatus is in good order and ready for you. . . . She looks very pretty and lifts well." On August 9, 1878, he writes: "I will see about the cable, etc. We got on as slowly as can be expected. I do not see much chance of getting an engine until you come back;" and he goes on to relate how "Captain Colville, of the Grenadiers, was married on Tuesday morning, and took his wife up at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. Nobody knew, and they had a nice landing in Cambridgeshire, close to the sea. I do not believe anyone knows now. I lent the 'Crusader' for the trip"—surely a very adventurous "going away" for a bride! When Watson was absent in Egypt, Templer kept him informed of every step made in his balloon experiments, and when Templer was in command of balloons in the Eastern Sudan it was naturally to Watson that he looked for official support and pressure at home.

When a vacancy occurred in the post of O.C. Balloon Section at Chatham, Watson was obviously the Royal Engineer officer marked out for the appointment, and none rejoiced more than his friend and collaborator, who, as instructor at Chatham and in right of his successful experiments, might very well have claimed the post himself; and did, in fact, succeed to it a year later. A letter from another old friend must have given the Officer in Charge excep-

tional pleasure. It was from Colonel G. E. Grover, R.E., who was the pioneer of war balloons so long ago as 1862. He wrote from the War Office, May 10, 1888:

"MY DEAR WATSON,

"Is it you that has become chief aeronaut to the Army? If so, I congratulate you and the Army, and I must some day get you to read my fossil papers on the subject written some twenty-six years ago, when I began to work. . . ."

As head of the Balloon Section, Watson was able to further Templer's projects with greater power, and his fine business qualities were apparent in increased efficiency in spite of much reduced estimates. The Balloon grant, which had gradually been raised to £3,000 a year, was cut down to £1,600, and it taxed Watson's resourcefulness to run the Section on this estimate, which he constantly represented to the authorities as thoroughly unwise economy. In his reports to the War Office he repeatedly urged the importance of recognizing the Balloon Section as an independent unit, increasing the number of N.C.O.'s and sappers, and providing horses and drivers for the waggons. He undoubtedly succeeded in some degree in penetrating official apathy, but even his warnings were imperfectly heard. Moreover, his tenure of the command of the Section was brief, as he was soon recalled to the War Office; but he did not therefore abandon his efforts to induce the Government to take up ballooning in the serious spirit that it deserved, and at no time were his services more in demand or more strenuously exerted than during the South African War. He also drew up a small but indispensable book of "Tables for facilitating Calculations respecting the Use of Balloons," which was printed at the Chatham Engineering School for the use of the Service in 1890. As Templer wrote, it proved "most

useful. I am much pleased with the Tables." In that year Watson took the opportunity of a tour in Germany to obtain permission to inspect the Military Balloon Establishment at Schöneberg, near Berlin, and wrote a report on it (April 17, 1890) for the War Office. It is interesting to note that this German establishment, then attached to the Railway Brigade, numbered only one Captain (Von Tschudi), two Lieutenants, and fifty non commissioned officers and privates, and that the annual grant for its maintenance amounted to about £5,000. The report contains full technical details, but, whilst recording his admiration of the way in which the Balloon Establishment was organized and the efficiency of the men, Watson did not see reason to prefer the German methods of equipment to the English, from which, indeed, they were doubtless, at least in part, derived. The report made no recommendations for the adoption of any of the German details in our own Service. There was at that date, of course, in Germany, as in England, no such thing as an airship driven by motor engines; no one could have prophesied the vast and rapid extension of the powers and functions of aircraft in the new century.

There is no need to emphasize the signal importance of the work achieved by Colonel Templer and Watson in developing war balloons. That these were not yet furnished with motive power does not affect the question, for you must first make your airship before you can think about putting engines into it; and all the difficult and elaborate problems connected with the building, inflation, and equipment of balloons were brought to perfection by Colonel Templer, aided, advised, and officially supported with unflinching loyalty and energy by Watson. That their labours were almost thrown away was not their fault, and was certainly not due to any want of warning or persist-

ence. The lamentable result was but one of many instances of the incapacity of the British Government to look ahead, or to listen to the monitions of those who could.

Watson's work upon airships has carried us far beyond the dates at the head of this chapter; but the subject had to be dealt with as a whole. In 1877 to 1880 he had many other things to do besides helping Templer in his balloon experiments, and the marvellous way in which he kept them all going at the same time reminds one of the feats of legerdemain, when half a dozen balls are simultaneously kept revolving in the air. What with his attendance at the Office, reports to the Defence and other Committees, surveys of the terrain for defence works, journeys to Woolwich and various other places in pursuit of improvements in balloon equipment, consulting with experts like Abel and Noble on the generation of hydrogen or the manufacture of bombs to be dropped from balloons—an interesting forecast of future Zeppelin diversions—drawing up detailed plans for the defence of ports all over the Empire by submarine mines, the wonder is that Watson ever had a minute to himself. The truth is that he was one of those busy men who organize their work and arrange their day so methodically that there is always time for everything. When someone asked him how he " found time " to do so many things, he answered, " My dear fellow, I don't *find* time, I *make* it." He never seemed to be in a hurry, yet he was always punctual and never in arrears. His Diary is a rigorous record of perpetual motion. He began the day with an hour or so's ride in the Park, before going to the War Office, seldom left the office, except on business, before his Chief had gone, and he often walked home with him. When the ballooning experiments were going on, he was constantly to and fro between Woolwich and Pall Mall, and he took

frequent journeys to Ireland, Scotland, and the Isle of Wight, and elsewhere, always arriving perfectly fresh; for he had the valuable power of sleeping in trains, and could never understand why other people couldn't. The turn of the week was frequently spent in the country, but his concise Diary and even his letters seldom tell us much about these visits. He does indeed allow himself to expand into a little humour on the subject of one of these excursions (January 20, 1876):

"I had rather a good evening at Faversham. I went down in the afternoon, and was met at the train as arranged. The Hiltons are nice people, and received me most hospitably. Preston House reminded me of 'Haide Prinzessen,' as it had a front and back house, distinct, and yet under the same roof. They appeared to be spoken of as 'this house and the other house,' by way of distinction, 'this house' being the one you are in at the time of speaking. As the inhabitants are related and constantly going and coming, it was hard to know who lived in which house at first. But it is rather hard altogether sorting people at Faversham. At the Rigdons' party, after being introduced to three or four Mrs. Hiltons and about five Miss Hiltons, my brain felt inclined to totter. There are several of our fellows stopping in 'the other house,' one of whom is engaged to Miss Flossie Hilton of 'this house,' so that I was not like a stranger. Not but what I settle down pretty soon anywhere. 'Chip' is in town, and was before a Medical Board to-day prior to going out to the Sudan. He hopes to start in a week or so."

His brother-sapper, afterwards Lord Kitchener, often comes into the Diary, and it is interesting, in view of Watson's later work for the Palestine Exploration Fund, to read the entry in 1876:

"*June* 8.—Walked with Conder and Kitchener to Albert Hall to see plans of Palestine."

These two officers had recently completed the Survey of Western Palestine, and were the best possible guides to the exhibition. There were frequent meetings and dinners with Kitchener in 1876 and again in 1878, when the lamented Field-Marshal, then still a Lieutenant R.E., had returned on leave from his work in Cyprus; but the Diary refuses to record any details of their conversation. Such entries as "Kitchener called, spoke of Babylon," or "Dined at the Junior with Kitchener, Poole, and Lang," are tantalizing. Kitchener was rarely much of a talker, but it is impossible to imagine anything but a vividly interesting conversation when Sir Hamilton Lang and Reginald Stuart Poole were at table with so good a listener and prompter as Watson. Other evenings were spent at meetings of the Royal Geographical Society, and theatres and even operas begin to enter the Diary; but Watson's comment, whether it be Irving in "Louis XI." or Rutland Barrington in "H.M.S. Pinafore," is invariably the laconic "Good," except when, after a certain performance of "Lohengrin," he says, very truly, "Good, but too loud." He spent his evenings often at the National Club, and from 1879 at his favourite Junior United Service Club in Charles Street, where he generally lunched and delighted to entertain his friends to luncheon. He was living in rooms in Jermyn Street up to February, 1878, when he took up his quarters in the Royal Engineers' house or Old Brompton Manor House, commonly called "The Cottage" (since demolished), in the grounds of the South Kensington Museum, and was fortunate in having his old friend of Chatham days, now Sir Elliott Wood, as "stable companion," whilst another friend, afterwards Major-General E. R. Festing, R.E., who became Director of the Science Museum, lived in the residence close by. "Charlie" Gordon, on his return from the Sudan, would often

drop in at "The Cottage" and spend the night, "and very delightful evenings they were," writes Sir Elliott. When Watson became Aide-de-Camp to Sir Lintorn Simmons, "we used occasionally to act at his house, Watson's rich Irish brogue being quite 'killing' when he was taking the part of some Eastern potentate." Watson, however, was no actor, and only took a part to help out a cast and amuse his friends. He was totally incapable of playing the lover on the stage.

After refusing to let him go to the Balkans on the Servian Boundary Commission, Sir Lintorn Simmons invited him (September 30) to be his Aide-de-Camp, and Watson took up the duties on October 15, 1878, when his engagements multiplied. He was, as he said, "more private secretary than Aide" in the normal sense of the term, and he had to prepare reports not only for the Defence and Siege Operations Committees as before, but, in 1879, for the Royal Commission on Colonial Defences and for the Army Organization Committee, for which the Inspector-General looked for "a good deal of assistance" from his Aide, and we find Watson drawing up an "actuarial report" on the Short Service System. But as Aide-de-Camp he was also bound to attend the Inspector-General at the Queen's and the Duke of Cambridge's levees, to accompany him on his official inspections all over the three kingdoms, and to assist in his dinner-parties and other social functions, in which his charm of manner, *savoir faire*, and easy conversation, won him general popularity.

CHAPTER VI

THE CAPTURE OF THE CAIRO CITADEL

(1882)

We must pass rapidly over the next few years of Watson's military service. The spring of the year 1879 found him working, in collaboration with Captain Templer, at his favourite subject of balloon equipment, and in May came the building of the "Pioneer," the "first military balloon," of which mention has been made in the previous chapter.

In November he entered upon his valuable War Office work as Aide-de-Camp to Sir Lintorn Simmons and wrote the admirable series of Reports on the French Frontier Forts, which he had visited in October. On Christmas Day he was gazetted to a Captaincy in his old Corps.

The end of the year was overshadowed to some extent by anxiety about Gordon. Towards the conclusion of November he wrote to his mother:

"Did you see a telegram in the papers saying that Gordon was shut in by some rebels in Abyssinia? It may not be true, but if it is, he may have some trouble in getting away, as it is a difficult country. But if anyone can get the matter square, he will! It would be a pity if there was a war between Egypt and Abyssinia, after all the trouble he has taken to keep the peace."

Again, on December 1:

"No more news of Gordon yet. I suppose, if it be really true that King John [of Abyssinia] has shut up the country and won't let him out, it may be some time before he can return to Egypt. If John does mean to fight, it would certainly be the most sensible thing he could do, as Gordon would not be a pleasant enemy for him."

Ten days later, however, the tension was completely relieved, and in a letter to his mother on the 11th he remarks:

"I heard from Gordon yesterday, from Abyssinia; he seemed well and cheerful, but told me nothing of his doings, as he said that he had written to his sister, who would send me the letters. But at all events he seems not to be in the bad way the newspapers made out, and I see by a telegram in the *Standard* yesterday that he was coming down to Massowah. He says he hopes to be home in January."

On the 29th Gordon wrote to Watson "*en route* for Suez":

"I hear you are going to take my advice and be married, and I am very glad to hear it."

Few men of his time could perhaps have been found with less superstitious weakness about them than Watson, and this characteristic of his appears notably in the arrangements made for his marriage, which, despite the popular belief about a May wedding, took place on the 11th of that month at Montrose. His bride was Geneviève, daughter of the Rev. Russell S. Cook, and granddaughter of the famous scholar, the Rev. Cæsar Malan, D.D., of Geneva, himself a descendant of a long line of French Huguenots, who were proud to count twelve martyrs in their family to the cause of their religion. A brief visit to Ireland followed the ceremony, which elicited a somewhat striking passage of self-revelation in a further letter from Gordon:

Gordon to Watson.

"*February* 29, 1880.

"MY DEAR WATSON,

"Prince Albert said to Colonel Duplat, when the latter told him he was going to marry, 'You are about to be an honest man.'

"A man who is not married cannot know his faults; a man's wife is his faithful looking-glass; she will tell him his faults. Some men who have sisters may know themselves, but it is rare. Therefore I say to you (as I have said before), '*Marry!*' Till a man is married he is a selfish fellow, however he may wish not to be so.

"Remember that by marrying you are no longer free for quixotic expeditions; you are bound to consider your better half; nothing is more selfish than a married man seeking adventures which his wife *cannot partake in*. To me, aged, and having gone through much trouble, it seems that to marry in this way is the best thing a man should do, and it is one which I recommend all my friends to do.

"You say, 'Why do not you follow your own advice?'

"I reply, 'Because I know myself sufficiently to know I could make no woman happy.'

"Yours sincerely,

"C. G. GORDON."

After a very short absence from his duties, Watson was again at work in town. His duties, however, no longer took him to the War Office, since in March of this year (1880) he had been invited by Viscount Cranbrook, then on the eve, as it afterwards transpired, of relinquishing his appointment as Secretary of State for India, to reorganize the Stores Department of the India Office, a task for which Watson was, not only by training and experience but also by his almost meticulously exact and methodical habits, singularly well fitted. The fall of the Ministry and Lord Cranbrook's resignation, which followed

on April 22, scarcely a month later, fortunately led to no interruption of his India Office labours.

The year ended auspiciously enough, as the preceding year had done, since on December 11 Watson passed his final examination at the Staff College, an occasion which was rendered notable by the fact that he was the last member of his Corps to pass this examination direct, without the formality of having to keep terms, or even that of passing the intermediate examination, a success which he owed to the remarkably wide range and completeness of his knowledge.

The succeeding year, and the first half of the year 1882, had passed with the same even flow of laborious effort and successful achievement as any of the years since May, 1875, when Watson's first period of active service in Egypt had come to an end. Indeed, up to the close of the summer there had been no actual foreshadowing of the great events which were to give him his long-desired opportunity of doing what he would himself have called "something useful," although those events were now closely impending, and were destined to influence powerfully his future career.

The dramatic events which in 1882 culminated in the formidable military revolt of the notorious Arabi Pasha, and in its almost miraculously prompt suppression by the small Expeditionary Force which was sent out from England on that occasion under Sir Garnet Wolseley, have been repeatedly described by competent military historians, including Watson himself. It is therefore unnecessary to say more of the circumstances which led to the establishment of British military supremacy in Egypt than will serve to complete the outlines of the picture for the general reader, and to fill in for biographical purposes as many details as possible from Watson's published (and especially from his unpublished) records.

As will be readily anticipated from what has been said of his character, his own particular share in these epoch-making events was quietly suppressed or at least so far as possible minimized, in all accounts of this period written by himself, so that the important part that he really played at the critical moment in these affairs has hardly, perhaps, even yet been fairly appreciated.

The peculiar difficulty of dealing with the Insurrection, with which first the British Fleet at Alexandria and afterwards Wolseley's Expedition were called upon to grapple, lay in the fact that it was supported by leading members of the Egyptian Government itself (among whom was included Arabi Pasha as Minister for War), as well as by the rank and file of the Egyptian Army, the size of which had promptly been increased, at the outbreak of war, to about six times its former numbers. Moreover, the so-called "National" or popular party, which had planned the rising, had done their utmost to give it the character of a Pan-Islamic Crusade by the most urgent appeals to Mohammedan religious fervour and anti-foreign prejudice.

Even the astute Suzerain of Egypt, the Sultan of Turkey, had, as overtly as he dared, at the first colourable opportunity, given much countenance to the rebellion. Had he not authorized his own emissary, Darwish Pasha, whom he had despatched (nominally, at least) to Tewfik Pasha's assistance, to bestow upon the arch-rebel Arabi the Medjidieh Order of the highest class, as soon as that somewhat Gilbertian functionary had "discovered," on reaching Cairo—what was doubtless well known to him before he left Constantinople—namely, that the rebel forces were stronger than those of the Government?

Had not the Father of the Faithful further hinted to Arabi—as if no distinction could be too great for

the man that he delighted to honour—that the existing Khedive of Egypt was a person "of no particular importance," and might, at the shortest notice, be replaced by any good son of Islam who should show himself capable of holding the country against infidels and foreigners? Had he not bluntly told the abortively protesting diplomats of the Great Powers that in regard to Egypt "no action" on his part was necessary, since "affairs in that country had already been settled" to his "entire satisfaction"?

Small wonder if the leaders of the rebellion, convinced, as indeed proved to be the case, that France would not under any circumstances intervene in Egypt, and that England could not act without French co-operation, counted upon an easy victory, though it is true that the result proved them to have been gravely mistaken, not only in regard to the attitude of England, but even in the matter of the *moral* of the troops that supported the rising.

It was, in any case, evident to the British Government that the matter could not be left as the Sultan desired, and the ungrateful task of "belling the cat" fell, as usual, to England. As the French had no intention of intervening, even their warships, which had meanwhile been sent to Alexandria, were now withdrawn completely, and the whole burden of the necessary action was thus thrown suddenly upon England.

The first shots were soon exchanged, and the silencing of the forts at Alexandria, which had been strengthened and armed by Arabi, was effected on July 11 by the guns of the British Fleet, after which the Arabs, having burnt and sacked the European quarter, evacuated the city.

We now take up the story at the point at which Watson's services once more became available for

employment in Egypt. Upon the news of the rebellion the British Government, acting for once in a spirit of prompt decision, had summoned the reserves, taken a vote of credit, sent instructions for a contingent of the Indian Army to sail at once for Egypt, and had then begun in earnest to organize the despatch of an Expeditionary Force from England to deal with the rebels.

It was with this latter force that Watson was now called upon to serve. The bombardment of Alexandria had taken place on July 11, and on the 14th Watson wrote to his friend, Captain Jopp, at the India Office: "I have this day received an intimation that in case of an Expeditionary Force being sent to Egypt, I may be offered an appointment on the Staff."

The proposal was proceeded with, and in view of the fact that the call was to active service the India Office agreed to place no difficulty in the way. Watson, therefore, duly received a letter instructing him to report himself to the Deputy-Adjutant-General, R.E., for employment in the Intelligence Department with the force about to proceed to Egypt—a service for which his knowledge of Cairo as well as of the language, not to mention his previous services under Gordon, rendered him, as things turned out, quite exceptionally well qualified.

A contretemps occurred, however, at this juncture, for on his reporting himself as had been directed, he was informed that the order issued for his employment had already been cancelled. It is instructive to reflect by what a narrow margin some of England's great military triumphs have been gained, for what a different turn the Cairo episode in this campaign might have taken had it not been for the almost accidental use of Watson's services at the most critical moment.

Fortunately for all concerned, this official blunder was promptly repaired through Watson's own vigorous action, and by July 26 the India Office and the War Office had come to terms and his services had been placed " at the disposal of H.R.H. the Field Marshal Commanding-in-Chief for employment on the Staff of the Intelligence Department in Egypt," it being arranged that his appointment at the India Office, in view of the " most valuable " nature of his services, should be kept open for a period of three months, until it was possible to judge what turn events would take.

Of the journey out to Egypt some valuable notes have been most kindly written down from memory by General (then Captain) Richard Lawrence, who accompanied Captain Watson on this occasion. General Lawrence writes:

" In September, 1882, while serving with a detachment of the 5th Dragoon Guards at Birmingham, I received a telegram ordering me to proceed in forty-eight hours to Liverpool and embark for Egypt on s.s. *Capella*, which was taking out a number of Lord Wolseley's Staff and all the horses of the Headquarters Staff.

" Among the officers embarking were Sir Owen Lanyon, Colonel (now Lord) Grenfell, Sir William Butler, Major (afterwards Sir Frederick) Maurice, Colonel Euston Sartorius, V.C., Captain Earle, and Captain Watson, whom I now met for the first time."

Watson to Mrs. Watson.

"*August* 8.

August 8.—" The time passes almost too quickly. There is a good deal of work at learning up Egypt, and, as you anticipated, my services have been called into use as a teacher of Arabic. I gave a lecture on the grammar and pronunciation this morning of over an hour to a large party, including [the Duke of] Teck, who is very eager and works as hard as anybody.

"The idea of poor me coming out in this line is rather amusing, but, as you know, 'among the blind the one-eyed man is a prophet.'"

Watson to Mrs. Watson.

"*August* 9.

"I am expected to give an account of the Valley of the Nile to-morrow, and have been busy all the afternoon preparing a map to illustrate the subject. All on board seem quite avid of information, including the Duke of Teck, who is perfectly happy at being a man among men and not a Serene Highness. He works and studies like the rest."

The lecture was a complete success, and Watson "went on without a stop for one hour, and then they asked me questions for half an hour."

At another time we find him giving his views on Egyptian politics to Sir Frederick Maurice (or Major Maurice, as he then was), the future historian of this very rebellion.

On the 15th he notes that "a little way from us are the *Euphrates* with the 96th and the *Egyptian Monarch* with the 7th Dragoons: so the transports are getting thick."

Of his fellow-travellers Watson gives an attractive picture: "A better or pleasanter set of officers it would not be easy to find," in which generous estimate we may perhaps be justified in seeing some reflection of what his fellow-travellers found in Watson himself.

One of Watson's letters, written on board the *Capella*, gives a fascinating picture of the scene presented by the fleet at Alexandria.

'EN ROUTE FOR THE SUEZ CANAL,

"*August* 19.

"We left Alexandria Harbour at daybreak, and went outside where all the ships assembled.

"It was a very fine sight to see all the transports and men-of-war collected together in regular order;

and then they filed off eastward in single line in divisions, each composed of man-of-war followed by three transports.

"There were five divisions, of which the first steered east and the other four turned into Aboukir Bay and anchored in four lines, thus:

Superb.	*Téméraire.*	*Inflexible.*	*Minotaur.*
Catalonia.	*Batavia.*	*Marathon.*	*British Prince.*
Nevada.	*Iberia.*	*Calabria.*	*Tower Hill.*
Orient.	*Capella.*	*Holland.*	*Palmyra.*

And also the *Northumberland* and the *Sultan*. At 8 o'clock a signal was made, and we all started for Port Said in line.

"The object of going to Aboukir was to induce the Egyptians to believe that we were going to attack their left flank, but whether it will have that effect or not remains to be seen; we shall know by this time to-morrow."

Watson's first letter from Egypt, from Kassassin Lock, is dated September 1, 1882, and his words are already significant of coming events:

"This is the most advanced post in the Army, about 20 miles from Ismailia and 6 miles from Tel-el-Kebir, where the Egyptian Army is. . . . On Monday the 28th [of August] Tulloch and I took the camp to Nefish, 2 miles from Ismailia, and stopped for the night, Conder waiting at Ismailia to bring up the rest of the camels. . . . After [dinner] there was a great scene, as word came that [General] Graham had been defeated here [at Kassassin], which was quite untrue, and consequently the regiment at Nefish was ordered to march at once to the front, leaving our company in case the Bedouins came down to attack it.

"Tulloch went on with the regiment, and I remained at Nefish in command. We put the place in a state of defence, and remained under arms until two o'clock in the morning, when the 87th Regiment came up from Ismailia to garrison Nefish.

"On the morning of the 29th Conder came up with the rest of the camels, and I started off to catch up Tulloch, whom I found here in the evening. I rode by Tel-el-Mahuta and Mahsama. At the latter place the Egyptians had abandoned their camp. . . .

"Here at Kassassin there was rather a severe fight on Monday,* as we had only a few troops up, whom the Egyptian General hoped to disperse before any more came up. In this, however, he was disappointed, as the garrison drove away the attacking party with considerable loss. We had about 150 killed and wounded.

"We dined and stopped for the night with Graham and Hart, by which I mean that we all slept on the ground together outside the hospital!

"The following morning Tulloch and I rode out to the front, to the place where our cavalry had made a charge. The Egyptians were still lying there; all the wounded had been killed by the Bedouins [their own people], except five, who were brought in and put in hospital. One of them was an officer.

"We endeavoured to establish a little confidence among the inhabitants, who seem to be peaceable enough, and to persuade them to bring in things to sell. . . .

"Yesterday morning I had a long ride among the villages on the south side of the canal, and tried to enter into friendly relations with the inhabitants, who were very willing to talk.

"I brought some of them back into camp with me, and they seemed glad to sell some of the country produce. It is a great comfort my being able to talk Arabic a little—in fact, without it one could not get on at all. . . .

"We are getting up supplies, but until a good stock is up no advance can be made towards Tel-el-Kebir against the Egyptians."

We have now reached the critical period of the fortnight before the battle of Tel-el-Kebir, an account

* This is obviously an echo of the fight on August 28, in which Major-General Graham successfully repulsed the very determined Egyptian attack.

of which can most fortunately be founded partly upon quotations from an unpublished narrative written by Watson himself, and partly upon his own notes and letters home describing the affair.

"My position during the campaign was that of Deputy-Assistant-Adjutant and Quartermaster-General on the Staff of the Intelligence Department, of which Colonel A. B. Tulloch (afterwards Major-General Sir A. B. Tulloch) was appointed Chief when the Expeditionary Force was organized.

"Besides the officers, there were attached to the Intelligence Department Messrs. MacCollough and Clarke of the Egyptian Telegraph Service, and Mr. Campbell, another Egyptian Official, and Khalil Aga, a non-commissioned officer of the Egyptian Police."

The British Expeditionary Force had sailed from Alexandria on August 19, and the Navy had occupied Ismailia on the 20th. The disembarkation of the troops followed. Major-General Graham was ordered to advance and seize Magfar, on the railway between Ismailia and Tel-el-Kebir.

"On the 21st Colonel Tulloch prepared to move forward with the advance-guard of the Army. But a difficulty arose in consequence of the deficiency of transport, owing to the lack of rolling stock and to the absence of any suitable pier at Ismailia for landing the engines from England, which, therefore, had in the end to be sent round to Suez.

"It soon became evident that even the small amount of transport required for the Intelligence Department could not be spared, and that it would be necessary to make our own arrangements for a move forwards. Captain Conder, therefore, got into communication with some of the Bedouin Arabs who lived in the neighbourhood, in order to negotiate for the purchase of a few camels.

"He was at once offered from 300 to 400, of which he bought ten, all that were required for our small

party, and he was informed that several thousand could be brought in the course of a few days.

"This was at once reported to the Chief of the Staff, as these animals would have been a most useful addition to the transport of the Army under the circumstances; but, much to our surprise, the offer was refused, and an Army Order issued to the effect that no camels were to be purchased.

"It is difficult to understand what the objection could have been to make use of the mode of transport ordinarily employed in the country.*

"Fortunately, our small pack of camels had been purchased and paid for before the Army Order was issued, so that we had no difficulty in making a start. For camel-drivers we utilized the services of some of Arabi's soldiers who had been taken prisoners, and who were delighted to receive a small rate of pay and their rations.

"As soon as the Intelligence Department Camp was formed, we moved forward at once, and joined Major-General Graham's force at Kassassin Lock, immediately after his successful repulse of the Egyptian attack on his position on August 28.

"During the fortnight which elapsed before the battle of Tel-el-Kebir we were fully employed in obtaining information with regard to Arabi's movements, and became well acquainted with the state of affairs inside the enemy's camp, both from the accounts given by prisoners and deserters, and also by the inhabitants of the district, some of whom seemed to have little difficulty in passing backwards and forwards between the British and Egyptian camps.

"They gave us interesting descriptions of the fortifications and of the feelings of the enemy's troops, many of whom, it appeared, were not at all keen about fighting, and were anxious to go to their homes as soon as possible."

By September 7 the repair of the railway had been completed and the concentration of the Army at Kassassin began.

* It is rumoured that the British Expeditionary Forces at present serving "somewhere" in Palestine and in Mesopotamia have overcome this singular repugnance to the employment of camels.

"Arabi Pasha was informed of this, and decided to make a move in order to check the advance of the British Army before it had all assembled in the vicinity of Kassassin.

"The Egyptian scheme of operations was well conceived, but badly executed. It was arranged that a large force of Egyptians should advance from Tel-el-Kebir against Kassassin, while at the same time the garrison of Salihiya, a place 15 miles to the north, was to move southwards and cut the British line of communications with Ismailia."*

The Egyptian attack took place on September 9. They advanced, indeed, "sufficiently near to shell the British camp; but the effect was small, as the fuses were bad, and the shells, for the most part, buried themselves harmlessly in the sand."

General Graham promptly moved his force

"to check the Egyptian advance, supported by General Drury Lowe and his Cavalry Division on the right flank, when the Egyptians halted and soon began to retire. One of their best Generals, Rashid Pasha Husain, was wounded, and the retreat became a rout, the British troops pursuing the flying foe to within three miles of the Tel-el-Kebir fortifications, which could doubtless have been taken had the British preparations for the move on Cairo been sufficiently far advanced."

True to his principle of ignoring or at least belittling his own personal share in the operations, Watson simply writes of this action:

September 9.—"I went over to our right flank, where the cavalry were, and then Colonel Tulloch sent me to the left with a message to General Graham, so I had a good view of the whole action."

In the afternoon of this day Watson and his colleagues of the Intelligence Staff were occupied with

* This was not done, and there can be little doubt that the failure of the Salihiya garrison to perform the task allotted to them had a profound influence on the issue of the battle.

the responsible task of eliciting information from the Egyptian wounded and from the newly made prisoners with regard to the dispositions of the enemy at Tel-el-Kebir.

"We received from them . . . confirmation of the accounts of the discontent existing in the camp at Tel-el-Kebir, and of the desire of many to give up fighting and return to their ordinary occupations.

"We also learned that there was a considerable probability that unless the British advanced rapidly the city of Cairo would be burned, not by Arabi and his soldiers, but by what were called the 'bad people,' persons of similar character to those who had destroyed Alexandria after the British bombardment.

"It was the recollection of this danger to the city that determined the rapid ride to Cairo of our cavalry after Tel-el-Kebir.

"Some of the stories of these prisoners were amusing. One man told me that his officer had recommended him to lie down and pretend that he was killed, and 'then the English soldiers will take you prisoner, and will not hurt you.' [Surely a very pleasant testimony to the native confidence in the humanity of our troops!] I asked him whether he was more afraid of the bullets or the shells, and he replied that he was in such a fright that he could not tell the one from the other. 'God only knows,' he said, 'what a fright I was in!' Another man informed me that he was Reader of the Quran in a village, had 'not learnt war,' and 'did not like it!'"

The preparations for the general advance meanwhile continued, and on September 12 the last battalion had arrived.

"The Staff of the Intelligence Department was broken up. Colonel Tulloch was ordered to remain with Sir G. Wolseley; Captain Conder was attached to the Indian contingent . . . while I was ordered to accompany Major-General Drury Lowe and the cavalry on the march to Cairo. Mr. MacCollough, who was a skilful telegraph operator, and Khalil Aga

[who have already been mentioned], were detailed to go with me.

"At 10 p.m. I left our camp at Kassassin, and rode over with MacCollough and Khalil to the cavalry lines, which were at some distance to the east. The cavalry camp was absolutely quiet, as all were taking a rest before starting on the march.

"Soon after midnight the 'Fall in' was sounded and the camp burst into life, and very quickly the Cavalry Division formed up in the desert, north of the line of railway.

"It consisted of the Heavy Brigade, commanded by Colonel Baker Russell, composed of the Household Cavalry and the 4th and 7th Dragoon Guards; the Indian Cavalry Brigade, under Brigadier-General H. C. Wilkinson, composed of the 2nd and 6th Bengal Cavalry and the 13th Bengal Lancers; two batteries of Royal Horse Artillery under Lieutenant-Colonel Nairne; and the Mounted Infantry, commanded by Captain R. C. B. Lawrence, 5th Dragoon Guards."

The story of the ever-memorable victory of Tel-el-Kebir needs no repetition. In an extraordinarily rapid and indeed irresistible charge, our gallant troops carried the Tel-el-Kebir fortifications and drove back Arabi's army headlong, in irrecoverable ruin.

Our concern, however, is with the fortunes of Watson himself, who was certainly more fortunate than his colleagues of the Intelligence Department, MacCollough and Khalil Aga.

"During the rapid advance [he writes in the memoir from which the previous quotations have been made] I had lost sight of MacCollough and Khalil Aga, and did not see them again until some days afterwards in Cairo.

"MacCollough's pony had broken down, and Khalil Aga had been taken prisoner by some *English* soldiers, who thought he was one of the enemy. It was not until he was brought into camp, and found someone who could speak Arabic, that he was able to explain that he was one of our own employés.

"After spending a little time looking for my two companions, I gave them up as lost, and rode on after the cavalry, passing by a number of wounded Egyptians, who were crying piteously for water. My bottle was soon emptied, and I gave them all my cigarettes, for which they were very grateful.

"We afterwards heard stories of how the wounded Egyptians tried to shoot those who came to assist them, but this was quite opposed to my own experience."

The Egyptian lines having been crossed, and the pursuit continued beyond them, a short halt was made at the railway, and Watson next received orders from General Drury Lowe to conduct the column of General Wilkinson to Bilbeis, which was about 18 miles away, along the northern bank of the fresh-water canal, which they successfully reached, encountering little opposition, close upon the heels (as they afterwards ascertained) of Arabi and his party, who reached Bilbeis a very short time before them.

On arrival at Bilbeis, Watson received orders from General Wilkinson to seize the railway station, the telegraph office, and the post office, and to bring him the Governor of the town.

These orders, it need hardly be said, were promptly executed by Watson, whose only difficulty was to reach the station, on account of the density of the crowd which had come out to welcome the British Army! It was at the station that he heard the story of Arabi's hasty departure for Cairo.

Having left a guard at the station, Watson brought the Governor of the town to General Wilkinson, who ordered him to provide food for the men and forage for the forces, the remainder of the Cavalry Division not having yet arrived.

From Bilbeis the column advanced next morning in continuation of the march to Cairo.

For this second part of the story of that great ride,

the permission of the Editor of *Blackwood's Magazine* has made it possible to quote from Watson's own narrative* of the momentous events which led, under his command, to the saving of the city of Cairo from the general conflagration and massacre of which it was now in such imminent danger.

The footnotes (where not otherwise stated) are from the memoranda kindly written for this work by General Richard Lawrence, to which we have already made reference.

"The column, about twelve hundred strong, consisted of the 4th Dragoon Guards and 2nd Bengal Cavalry, part of the 6th and 13th Bengal Cavalry, and the Mounted Infantry.

"The sun had not yet risen, and the morning air was cool and refreshing, while the hard gravelly surface of the desert made good going for the horses. There were no more Egyptian runaway soldiers to be seen, and the inhabitants of the villages which we passed all seemed to be peacefully disposed. Two Egyptian officers, Dhulier Bey, a Belgian, and Husain Effendi Ramsi, who had been sent by the Khedive to Ismailia, and were attached to General Lowe's Staff, read out, every now and then, a proclamation to the villagers, assuring them of peace and security if they were faithful to the Khedive. To this the people replied with loud cries of 'Aman! Aman!' ('Peace! Peace!'). Not a word of regret was to be heard for the defeat of Arabi, which had by that time become generally known.

"As the morning wore on, and the sun rose higher in the sky, the heat steadily increased until it was like that of a furnace; but no halt was made until a little after noon, when we reached the village of Es-Siriakus, about twenty miles from Bilbeis. Here some food for the men and forage for the horses were easily obtained, and an hour's rest under the shade of the palm-trees was much appreciated.

"When the column started again, we left the canal,

* By Colonel Sir C. M. Watson, K.C.M.G., C.B., published in *Blackwood's Magazine* for March, 1911.

which had been followed from Bilbeis, and went into the desert, so as to avoid the low ground, broken up with little irrigation canals, and not suitable for the movement of cavalry. We were now drawing near to Cairo, and naturally our conversation turned to the question as to what kind of reception we were likely to meet with, as it was known that there was a garrison of about twenty thousand troops, which had not fought at Tel-el-Kebir, and which might be prepared to resist our advance to the capital. I told the General and Herbert Stewart of what we had heard as to the probability of Cairo being burnt like Alexandria, and pointed out the great importance of putting British troops in the Citadel that evening. There is an old Egyptian saying, 'He who holds Cairo holds Egypt; he who holds the Citadel holds Cairo,' and it was almost certain that once the population knew that the Citadel was in the possession of the British, all resistance would collapse. But it was, of course, not possible to say how the Citadel was to be secured until it was known what the Cairo garrison would do, and whether Arabi would spur them on to fight, or would bow to fate and acknowledge that he was beaten at Tel-el-Kebir.

"Soon we saw the line of the Mokattam Hills, which rise sharply over the city of Cairo, and then gradually we could make out the dome and minarets of the mosque of Mohammad Ali in the Citadel. An hour more brought us within sight of the great barracks of Abbasia, situated in the desert, two miles north-east of the city, round which we could see thousands of Egyptian soldiers swarming, and looking just like ants whose ant-hill has been disturbed. General Lowe ordered his force to advance by echelon of squadrons from the left, making as great a show as possible with the small number he had under his command.* Then he halted the cavalry and sent Colonel Stewart forward to reconnoitre, and to see what was going to happen.

"Stewart took an escort of fifty men, and, accompanied by Lieutenant-Colonel H. McCalmont, the

* General Lawrence notes: "It was an imposing sight and the enemy could not tell what was behind us."

Brigade Major, the two Egyptian officers, and myself, started on his mission of investigation. We rode on towards the barracks, and saw an Egyptian squadron of cavalry coming out to meet us, every man of whom had a white flag, or something that represented a white flag, tied to his carbine. The Abbasia garrison had decided to surrender, and were determined to do it in good style!

"It may be interesting to relate what happened in Cairo while the British cavalry were advancing from Tel-el-Kebir, and I will give the account, as described to me afterwards by one of the members of the Egyptian Council of Defence.

"It was known in Cairo that the British Army had concentrated at Kassassin on September 12, and that there might be a battle at any time, but when it would come off was, of course, uncertain. As I have already mentioned, Arabi Pasha, escaping from Tel-el-Kebir after the fight, had got to Bilbeis, and started from it by rail just before General Wilkinson's column arrived. When Arabi reached Cairo, he went to Kasr-en-Nil Palace, where the Council of Defence were holding a meeting. He was tired out, and quite collapsed when he sat down; then, raising his head after a time, he said, 'It is all finished,' and told the Council of the defeat of the Egyptian Army, and that the English would soon be in Cairo. Then there was a great discussion as to what was to be done. Some were for making further resistance, while others were for sending their submission to the Khedive. A little later news came in that the British had taken possession of Zagazig, which General Macpherson, with the Indian contingent, had occupied on the afternoon of September 13.

"General Macpherson, as soon as he reached Zagazig, telegraphed to Cairo to announce his arrival, and late that evening the Egyptian Council decided to send a deputation to the Khedive, offering their submission to him, and they sent a telegram to Sir G. Wolseley informing him of the fact, and begging him to take no further action 'until you receive orders from His Highness the Khedive.' There can be no doubt that the Council wanted, as the Chinese say, 'to save their face'; they wished it to be under-

stood that they made their submission to the Khedive, *not* to the Commander-in-Chief of the British Army.

"Nothing more, according to my informant, was done that night, but the next morning, when they found that the British had not yet arrived, the more warlike members got in the ascendant, and it was decided to take steps for defending Cairo, in case the British Army advanced towards it. It was arranged that entrenchments should be thrown up in front of Abbasia, and an Engineer officer was sent to carry this out. The line was traced and the work of digging had actually begun, when the small force of cavalry under General Drury Lowe was seen in the distance, and a messenger was sent in at once to the Council to inform them that 'the whole English Army was arriving.'

"Then there was naturally the greatest excitement, and the members of the Council were at their wits' end what to do. I was never able to ascertain whether they came to any decision, nor whether they sent orders to the garrison of Abbasia to surrender, but I am inclined to think that it was a case of every man for himself, and that the commander of the troops at that place decided that it was the best policy to surrender, no matter what the Council might do. But, however that may be, there can be no doubt that when Colonel Herbert Stewart and his handful of men approached the Abbasia Barracks, the commanding officer came out to meet him, and surrendered unconditionally with his force of cavalry, artillery, and infantry, about ten thousand in all.

"It was quite a dramatic scene; in the centre was the little group of British and Egyptian officers discussing the terms of surrender, while on the one side were the British and Indian troopers, and on the other the squadron of Egyptian cavalry; behind, the white mass of Abbasia Barracks, about which we could see a great number of Egyptian soldiers, some drawn up in a column, and some wandering here and there, like sheep without a shepherd. Then, as a background, Cairo in the distance, and beyond all the eastern sky, bright with the red gleam of the setting sun.

"The preliminaries were soon arranged, and then

the British advance-guard moved on to the barracks, while Stewart sent me back to General Lowe to tell him that all was well. As soon as the troops heard that Abbasia had surrendered, they gave a ringing cheer, and were then ordered to close up and advance. The greater part of the cavalry, however, were kept out in the desert, and not brought into the barracks, as the General thought it wiser not to let it be seen what a small number of men he had with him.

"Immediately after the surrender at Abbasia, Colonel Stewart ordered the commanding officer to send to Cairo and summon the Governor, the Chief of Police, and the Commandant of the Citadel, and these gentlemen all came out in a short time and tendered their submission to General Lowe. The Chief of Police was asked for information about Arabi Pasha, and stated that he was in his own house; he was directed to return to Cairo, and bring Arabi out to Abbasia. The Governor and the Commandant were then informed that the Citadel must be surrendered that evening. The Governor begged General Lowe not to send any troops into Cairo that night, as he feared it might cause a disturbance, but the real danger was, of course, that if British troops did not occupy the Citadel at once, the evil-disposed people of the town would feel that there was no one in authority, and would do mischief. After some discussion the Commandant agreed, though rather reluctantly, to surrender the Citadel, if required to do so.

"After darkness had set in, Colonel Stewart informed me that he was to take a small force of cavalry and occupy the Citadel, and that I was to take possession of the fort on Mokattam Heights, which commanded the Citadel, with another small force. This seemed a very satisfactory arrangement, as it was desirable that the Egyptians should be turned out of both these positions before the sun rose, and before the people realized what an insignificant British force had reached Cairo. The hour named for the start was 8 p.m., as it was important that we should not march until it was quite dark.

"At that hour, when the troops were falling in, Colonel Stewart told me that the plan had been

changed, and that he was to remain at Abbasia with General Lowe, and that, as I knew Cairo, I was to take command of the force which was to occupy the Citadel and turn out the Egyptian garrison. He gave me no written orders, and said that I was to carry out the operation in whatever way I thought best. I asked him what was to be done about the fort on Mokattam, as it was impossible for me to go to both places at the same time, and he replied that I must use my own discretion with regard to it. Although it was a certain responsibility, it was, on the other hand, rather satisfactory not to be hampered by detailed orders, as I was thus able to make my own arrangements.

"The force placed at my disposal by Colonel Stewart consisted of five officers and eighty-four non-commissioned officers and men of the 4th Dragoon Guards, under Captain Darley,* and four officers and fifty-four non-commissioned officers and men of the Mounted Infantry, under Captain Lawrence. I also took with me Husain Effendi Ramsi, who had come with us from Tel-el-Kebir, and three of Arabi's officers, one of whom, an Engineer, had been employed in strengthening Abbasia against us a few hours before. I made it clear to these officers that their future in life depended on doing exactly what I told them, but they fully realized the situation, and were very helpful.

"As it was important that we should not be seen by the inhabitants of Cairo until close to the Citadel, I decided not to enter the town by the Bab Husainia, the gate nearest to Abbasia, but to follow the desert road leading by the Tombs of the Memluk Sultans, commonly called the Tombs of the Caliphs, and to enter by a small and little used gate, called the Bab-el-Wezir, which is just under the Citadel. It was very important that we should find this gate open, as, if it was closed, it would have been necessary to go round to another gate some distance off, and this would have lost considerable time. The Engineer officer, who was thoroughly acquainted with the fortifications of Cairo, assured me that we would find the Bab-el-Wezir open, and, as his own interest

* General Lawrence notes: "Afterwards killed at Abu Klea."

depended on his telling the truth, I decided to trust him.

"As soon as the little force had fallen in, I marched them off, and then rode to the head of the column, telling each file, as I passed, that they must never lose sight of the file in front of them; this was essential, as the night was pitch dark and, with the dust raised by the horses, it was difficult to see more than a few yards ahead. Those who know the road in daytime will understand that it is not an easy one to follow on a dark night, but my Egyptian guide knew it thoroughly, and I soon felt that he could be trusted to lead us right.

"We first crossed the desert for about two miles, then passed through the great cemetery of Kait Bey, and over mounds of rubbish, full of holes, which were hard to avoid in the dark; and we seemed to have ridden for an interminable time, when, at last, the walls of Cairo rose before us. Then we drew near to the Bab-el-Wezir, and I became a little anxious lest it should be shut after all. But when we got close the door stood open, and I rode through the dark tunnel and found it quite clear to the far end; neither was there a sign of a sentry, or of anyone watching the gate, so I brought our party through, and led them up the hill to the Citadel.

"The street leading up to the gate was very narrow and very steep, and the houses on each side were in darkness, except for the little shops below, in which were collected a number of people, who looked at the British soldiers with surprise, probably not unmixed with fear. At the end of this short street we turned to the left into the broad road leading up to the main gate of the Citadel, and I halted the party at a little distance from the gate, and went on to the gate with the Egyptian officers to see how matters stood.

"There was a strong guard on the gate, who evidently had not expected us, and it was soon clear that, notwithstanding the promise of the Commandant, no arrangements had been made for sending the Egyptian garrison out of the Citadel. I therefore ordered the officer in charge of the guard to go to the Commandant and tell him to come to me at once. This took a considerable time, and I am inclined

SIR CHARLES ON A WINTER HOLIDAY IN NORWAY

to think that the good Commandant had gone to bed.

"He came out at last, however, accompanied by a number of officers, and asked what I wanted him to do. I said that he must parade the whole garrison without any delay, and send them down to the Kasr-en-Nil Barracks in the lower part of Cairo. I said that I had brought a British force to garrison the Citadel, and that the keys of all the gates were to be handed over to me at once. He seemed a little doubtful at first, but not having any idea how many men we had, he decided to comply, and sent for the keeper of the keys, who brought a number of very large keys in a beautiful bag, and handed them over. Then the Commandant sent officers to the different barracks, and soon bugles were heard all over the Citadel, sounding the assembly, and the troops began to hurry out of their quarters and to fall in on the large open space between the mosque of Mohammad Ali and the mosque of En-Nasir-ibn-Kalaun.

"As I was anxious not to let the Egyptian troops pass our small party, I arranged to march them out by a different road to that by which we had come up. Those who know the Citadel will remember that there are two principal entrances, of which one, the Bab-el-Azab, or lower gate, is in the Place Rumeyla, opposite the great mosque of Sultan Hasan. This was the old entrance, and from it a steep road, the scene of the massacre of the Memluks by Mohammad Ali in 1811, leads up to the Bab-el-Wustani, or middle gate. The present principal entrance, on the other hand, known as the Bab-el-Gedid, or main gate, which was built by Mohammad Ali when he reconstructed the Citadel, is much higher up the hill; the road passing through it joins the road leading up from the Bab-el-Azab, just outside the middle gate. This disposition of the gates was very convenient for my purpose, as I was able to place our men on the road leading from the main gate to the middle gate, while the Egyptian troops were marched out by the steep road which went down to the Bab-el-Azab, and did not pass by our men. One of our officers and a couple of men were placed at the Bab-el-Azab, to hurry them out into the town.

"I was considerably struck with the good discipline of the Egyptians, who fell in by companies and marched off, as if they were quite accustomed to being roused up in the middle of the night and turned out by foreign troops. But, in addition to the regular soldiers, there were a great number of what appeared to be camp-followers, women, laden camels, donkeys, etc., and these hurried out of the Citadel with the troops, much interfering with the regularity of the march of the latter. For more than two hours the stream of Egyptians came out through the middle gate, and it was past midnight before the last stragglers went down the hill. As already mentioned, I had ordered them to go to Ḳasr-en-Nil Barracks; but a considerable number never arrived there, as they took the opportunity, while marching through the streets of Cairo in the dark, of slipping away and going to their homes; this, however, was a good thing, as they were useful messengers to spread the news of how they had been turned out of the Citadel by the 'English Army.'

"While watching the strange procession at the gate, I thought over the question of the fort on Moḳattam Heights, and considered how the Egyptian troops were to be got out of it. It was clearly no use trying to do it with our troops, and none of our officers knew where it was, and the men and horses were too tired for another expedition. At last a happy thought struck me, and I hailed an intelligent-looking Egyptian officer on his way out of the Citadel, and said that I would be much obliged if he would go up to the fort, send the garrison to Ḳasr-en-Nil, lock the gate and bring me the keys. He thought for a moment, then said, 'Hadir, ya Sidi' (All right, sir), and went off at once. From his manner he gave me the idea that he would carry out his mission, and my confidence was justified, as he came back in two hours with the keys.

"Before leaving Abbasia, Colonel Stewart had instructed me that, after I had cleared out the Citadel, I was to leave the next senior officer in command for the night, then to examine into the condition of Cairo, and return to Abbasia to report to General Lowe. As soon, therefore, as the garrison had

evacuated the Citadel, I told Captain Lawrence, the next senior and an excellent officer, that he was to take command when I left, and took him round to give him a general notion of the fortifications. I had been acquainted with the place some years before, and had a fairly good idea of the important points, but to one who saw it for the first time on a dark night it must have seemed a puzzling labyrinth. Husain Ramsi and the Engineer officer accompanied us, and sentries were posted on the different gates with orders to let no one in or out during the night.

"The Citadel seemed quiet, and I thought our task was over; but as Captain Lawrence and I were returning to the middle gate, we were rather startled by hearing a tremendous noise, shouting and clanking of chains, as if pandemonium had broken loose. We then found that the din was caused by the prisoners, of whom there were many hundreds, who had been roused by the sound of the departing garrison, and had opened the prison door and were trying to escape. We succeeded in driving them back, and then went into the prison, which smelt badly. Here were a great number of prisoners, closely packed together, some regular gaol-birds, and others who looked as if they might be respectable members of society.

"The latter crowded round us, and said they had been put in prison because they would not support the rebels, and they asked me to investigate their cases immediately and release them. The idea of holding a court under the circumstances was rather humorous, and I told them that it was impossible to do anything for them that night, but that, as the English had taken possession of Cairo, their cases would be gone into as soon as possible, and justice would be done. The following day, when Colonel Wilson arrived in Cairo, I told him of the state of the prison in the Citadel, and he obtained authority to go into the matter and to release all those persons who had been imprisoned without due cause.

"Having quieted the prisoners as far as possible, we went out of the prison, the doors were locked, and sentries were posted with orders to shoot anyone

who tried to escape. Notwithstanding this, I believe that a certain number did succeed in getting away after I left the Citadel, and I know that one man at least was shot. This was an inoffensive individual, coachman to one of the American officers in the Egyptian service, who had been put in prison because he was supposed to be in favour of the Europeans. Fortunately, he was not much hurt, and soon recovered.

"After the episode with the prisoners had concluded satisfactorily, I went with the Commandant to his quarters to discuss the situation. Having been a supporter of Arabi, he was naturally anxious as to his prospects, and enquired whether I was satisfied with the way he had acted. I told him that he had behaved admirably so far, but that he must remain in the Citadel for the night, and do all he could to assist Captain Lawrence, explaining to him at the same time that if anything disagreeable happened he would be held responsible. I then questioned him as to the composition and strength of the Egyptian garrison which had been in the Citadel, but, rather curiously, neither he nor his officers could give a definite account of the number of men, and their estimates varied from 5,000 to 7,000. By a rough calculation I had made while they were marching out, there were about 6,000, and this number, or perhaps a little more, was probably nearly correct.

"After again giving a word of caution to the Commandant, I bade him good-night, and went with Captain Lawrence to the main gate. Here the Egyptian officer had just arrived who had carried out the evacuation of the fort on Mokattam Heights, and I thanked him for having assisted me and let him go home. Then, leaving Captain Lawrence in charge of the Citadel, I started to carry out the second part of my instructions, as regards the examination of the state of Cairo, taking with me Husain Ramsi and the Engineer officer."

For an account of the many anxieties during the rest of this eventful night, from the time when Watson left the Citadel to examine and report upon

the state of the City, the following extract is by permission quoted from the MS. Memoranda of General (or, as he then was, Captain) Lawrence himself, who, as being the next senior officer to Watson, was left in command of the Citadel to hold it until relief came.

"When the tail of the column had passed out, Watson came and told me that I was to remain in charge of the Citadel, and that he would return to Sir Drury Lowe.

"I then walked round to find the gates as best I could, and I think there were four, but to my disgust I found them in possession of Egyptian guards. Calling out the officer of the guard at the first gate I came to, I tried him with English, French, and German in vain, so I drew my revolver and, taking him gently by the arm, led him towards the gate, and, pointing to his men, waived them all out. They went like lambs, and we locked the great doors.

"A similar procedure answered equally well at all the gates. After posting a guard of Mounted Infantry or Dragoons at each gate, I collected the men in two open spaces and appointed alarm posts. My own men of the M.I. appeared to be dead beat, and, throwing themselves on the ground, slept at once, but the Dragoons were much fresher and fitter.

"I remember even now that I was much impressed by the gravity of the situation. We held for the moment the key of the situation, with all its host of uncertainties and doubts, quite beyond reach of any support from our main body at Abbasia, in a great bewildering mass of buildings, whose darkness was only accentuated by the feeble light of our few lanterns.

"Taking a light, I began to march round, and, poking into holes and corners, I found numbers of stragglers left behind by the Egyptians.

"These I turned out at the nearest gate, but a further and more disagreeable surprise was in store!

"Hearing a loud murmur of voices and clanking sounds, I came round a corner unseen before to find

some hundreds of men and women sitting round a fire that was burning on the ground, busy knocking iron shackles off their legs !

" It appeared that there were two prisons in the Citadel, and the departing troops had played us a nasty trick by letting the prisoners loose before they marched out themselves !

" These people had then broken open an armourer's shop and obtained tools to suit their needs. I ordered up at once two guards from the Dragoons, and we rushed all the poor wretches back into their prisons, and slammed the doors on those dark, evil-smelling holes !

" Leaving the guards on these two doors, I found some cells with European prisoners, or men of a better class, and seeing them safely shut in, passed along on my rounds.

" Next I found one of my own sentries sleeping hard at one of the main gates, and had to whack him awake and warn him that the usual penalty of such conduct was death before he seemed to realize his duties !

" And so the night went on, until at 3 a.m. I found I was staggering a bit myself; and after a good deal of shaking I succeeded in waking my Adjutant, whom I directed to patrol till daylight, when he could report to me again.

" I lay down on the ground near the other officers and slept at once.

" It has always been a regret to me that I was unable to be present at Watson's interview with the Governor of the Citadel, but if I had been, I must have missed a great deal through ignorance of the language.

" I have a vague recollection that before he left me at the Citadel, Watson did take me to a room in one of the large buildings, where we saw a sleepy old Pasha sitting on a divan, to whom Watson explained that I was taking charge, and I think this must have been the Governor.

" When daylight came I got up at once and went round to see how things were going. I found that one of the prisoners had been shot during the night while trying to escape; but we had no doctor with us

to look to the man's wounds, and so he had to be laid down in the shade.

"The first thing was to try and find food for the men and forage for the horses.

"There was a good deal of Egyptian ration bread made in big loaves, but so hard that it needed something like an axe to cut it, and there was some *busa* (straw) for the horses.

"Meantime there arrived an Egyptian police official who knew French or English, and informed me that he knew of the whereabouts of a midshipman named De Chair, who had been taken prisoner at Alexandria at some early stage in the war. My fear of riot and massacre in the town had not yet been dispelled, and I therefore wrote M. De Chair a line explaining the situation, and advising him to take the risk of coming in to us.

"The policeman went off, and in an hour or so brought M. De Chair in. I then wrote a requisition for meat and vegetables, which the policeman obtained for my men, and we cooked these as best we could.

"A visit to the Egyptian prisoners was my next care, and we sent out bread and water to them, finding that in the light of day they were only a poor and miserable crew of half-starved natives.

"On endeavouring to open communications with our Headquarters, I learnt that the guards had got through by train from Zagazig, and were coming on to relieve us.

"Wandering round the Citadel, I learnt more of the place, only to see how hopeless our positions might have been if we had met with resistance on arrival, or any determined attacks during the night.

"The Citadel certainly commanded the town, but it needed carefully planned arrangements for defence on the one hand or attack on the other; and as for dominating the City, there was but little to be done without guns, and we had none!

"About noon H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught came up with the advanced parties of the Guards, when I handed over the Citadel and marched off the Mounted Infantry to the Kasr-en-Nil Barracks down in the

town, sending the two squadrons of Dragoons back to Abbasia."

The conclusion of Watson's amazing and adventurous achievements on this unforgettable occasion—how he fulfilled his mission of examining Cairo after midnight, not omitting the ride through the extremely perilous Coptic quarter, in the sole company of one of the rebel officers who had so recently fought under Arabi, and how he reported to General Lowe the exact fulfilment of all General Stewart's apparently impossible instructions—have already been related.

The entire campaign, and in particular the seizure of the Citadel, may well be described as a brilliant example of the unexpected advantages that accrue from a wisely considered "improvement of victory."

The calls upon the Intelligence Department especially could hardly have been more continuous or more exacting, and it seems reasonable to assume that this capture must have been an appreciable economy, not merely of war material and expenditure, but actually of human life on both sides.

Under the circumstances it is perhaps legitimate to surmise that military jealousy of the R.E.'s, which was an article of faith with Army officers of a particular school at this time, may have led to the curious lapse of memory shown both in Sir G. Wolseley's Official Despatch of September 16 and in General Drury Lowe's enclosed Report, which appeared in the *London Gazette* of October 6, 1882, and assigned the exclusive credit for effecting the capture of the Citadel to an officer *who was not present at the surrender*, whereas Watson himself and an officer of the Royal Irish Fusiliers were the *only two not mentioned* in the Despatch, out of a total of thirty-five officers, who received promotion for their services on this occasion.

Watson's habitual indifference to such matters, however, stood him in good stead on this occasion, and in point of fact after a brief delay the omission was rectified, for on November 18 he records in his Diary the issue of the *Egyptian Gazette*, in which he was given a Brevet-Majority, with the Fourth Class of the Order of the *Medjidieh;* he received at the same time the medal and the bronze star.

Before leaving for England, Watson was able to enjoy, as may well be imagined, his few remaining days in Cairo. His linguistic services, owing to his knowledge of Arabic, were much in request among his brother-officers, and in a letter to his wife dated September 22 he remarks: " I have become a regular dragoman !"

On September 13, after mentioning that he had taken a fellow (R.E.) officer to see the Citadel, the mosque, and other sights of Cairo, he concludes: " You see, I am regarded as a regular guide to Cairo and the neighbourhood !"

On the 24th, having occasion to visit the Abdin Barracks, he had an interview with Arabi himself and Toulba Pasha, the two principal prisoners.

Four days later (on September 28) he writes:

" After breakfast I was at Shepheard's Hotel, when we heard a tremendous explosion. A train full of Egyptian ammunition standing in the railway station had caught fire, and the shells and small arms cartridges went on exploding for many hours; it was like the battle at Tel-el-Kebir over again. A great deal of damage was done and large numbers of railway waggons destroyed. Of course, there was a good deal of excitement, but things quieted down soon, and the shells went on exploding until they were all done. Fortunately, very few men were killed or hurt."

"*September* 29.

"Captain Warren,* R.E., who has been looking for Gill and Palmer, came up from Suez, and as he did not know Cairo, I went about with him most of the day, bringing him to the various places he wanted to go to.

"Sir C. Wilson† and Sir E. Malet [accompanied us]. Wilson and Warren both dined at the Royal Hotel, and we had a good deal of talk about Egyptian affairs."

On the 27th he writes:

"After lunch I saw Sir C. Wilson again, and told him that I had heard that Ali Bey, who had given up the Citadel, had been arrested, which was not right. He asked me for a memo. on the subject, and said he would see what could be done."

Later on in the same letter he writes:

"Wilson told me that Sir E. Malet had insisted that Ali Bey should be set free, which was done. This is satisfactory."

A very enjoyable function on the same day was

"an R.E. dinner at Shepheard's, so as to get as many of our people together [as possible] before we break-up. We had about forty-two."

* Afterwards Sir Chas. Warren. Watson's Diary shows that soon after reaching England (October 20) he "saw Gill's mother and brother." Two days later he "saw Burnaby about Gill Memorial Fund," in the promotion of which Watson was, of course, himself the principal mover. It may be recollected that Captain Gill had been sent by Admiral Hoskins with special instruction to cut the wires in order to hamper the enemy's communications, whereas Palmer (the famous Professor of Arabic at Cambridge University), who had offered his services for the war, and Lieutenant Charrington, R.N., were on a secret mission to the Arab Chiefs, when they were all captured and murdered (on August 10). (*Cf.* "History of the Corps of Royal Engineers," vol. ii., p. 66.)

† Sir C. Wilson had been sent to Egypt in a political capacity. The Royal Hotel was the only hotel open in Cairo on the 16th, when Watson reached Cairo, and he was still staying there.

We may conclude this account of Watson's active service in Egypt in 1882 with his description of the great "March Past" in honour of the termination of hostilities, which took place at Cairo on September 30 in the presence of the Khedive.

"After lunch I went with Colonel Warren to see the March Past of the English Army at the Abdin Palace. Of course, you have seen the whole account of it in the papers. It was certainly very effective.

"The Khedive had the best place in the middle of the grand stand, and Sir Garnet was in front of him on horseback. It was rather an amusing idea to think that, [we] having completely demolished the Egyptian Army, our Army was marched past the Khedive for his amusement. I should not think that the like had happened before.

"Our men looked very well, and seemed much to impress the natives, especially the Highlanders, with their kilts. I met some old Egyptian friends—indeed, I have met nearly all the folk I knew when here before, and we renewed our acquaintance.

"Conder* is a little better, and I hope we can start for Alexandria to-morrow morning."

Alexandria was reached on October 1, and on the 2nd Watson embarked on the s.s. *Nevada* for the homeward journey, the ship sailing on the 3rd, on which day he writes:

"Colonel Drake, R.E., is C.O., and has asked me to act as Adjutant. We have 25 officers and 330 men on board, nearly all invalids."

Some of these invalids died on the way home and were buried at sea, but otherwise the voyage was uneventful.

Colonel Buller,† it is interesting to note, was a passenger as far as Malta.

The illness of Watson's friend, Conder, was extremely serious, and, with his customary devotion,

* Who had been seriously ill.

† Afterwards General Sir Redvers Buller.

Watson assiduously tended him until he was out of danger. It was, in fact, the care and attentive nursing that he thus received that saved Conder's life, as clearly appears in private letters of this period from Captain Conder's wife and family.

The *Nevada* reached Portsmouth on October 16, and Watson disembarked there in the course of the evening, after making arrangements for sending Conder to Netley Hospital, where he was to stay until he was well enough to be taken home.

On the following day (October 17) Watson was back again at home in Victoria Road, having returned from this "lightning campaign" to his former duties at the India Office, within the limit of three months' time for which he had been granted leave of absence.

CHAPTER VII

THE REORGANIZATION OF EGYPT

(1883)

It was perhaps inevitable that Watson should feel at this time that events were happening in Egypt, and in fact were bound to happen, as an aftermath of the late campaign, in connection with which he might be capable, if on the spot, of rendering really important services.

A letter from his old friend Sir Charles Wilson, at this time Intelligence Officer and Principal Adviser to Lord Dufferin, written from H.B.M.'s Consulate-General at Cairo, had reached him towards the end of November, soon after his return to England, and from this and similar sources of information, as well as from his own ripe knowledge of the country and the people, Watson was well aware of the gravity of the crisis through which Egypt was passing.

An opportunity was not long in coming, for his "Record" states that in January, 1883, Sir Evelyn Wood "asked me to go to Egypt to help the reorganization of the Egyptian Army."

The exact date of this invitation is not stated, but it must have been very early in the month, since on January 19 we have the further record:

"Proceeded to Egypt; appointed Surveyor-General with rank of Colonel (*Bey Miralai*)."

The vessel on which he sailed this time was the s.s. *Venetia*, with Lady Wood on board, and a mixed

assortment of Indian officers, tourists, a barrister going as Judge to Cyprus, and American artist, a Brazilian Engineer who talked in a "curious" style of French, mixed with Portuguese, and a "Swede" who had spent eight years in Egypt among the Moslems, "studying their customs," and "talked German"!

A quotation from one of Watson's own published works will suggest the novelty of the situation with which the Egyptian Government had now to deal, and the energy with which it set about the tremendous task of reorganization.

"After the occupation of Egypt by England in 1882, described in vol. ii. (see p. 69), the Egyptian Army that then existed was done away with, and a new army established under the command of General Sir Evelyn Wood, the first Sirdar, who asked for the services of twenty-two officers of the British Army to assist in the reorganization, of whom five were officers of the Royal Engineers."*

One of the five R.E. Officers thus signally distinguished was, as we have already seen, Watson himself, and from the passage quoted we may anticipate that as so complete a break with the past was contemplated, there was certain to be abundant scope for the employment of all of even his quite exceptional versatility and energy before the main flood of Egyptian affairs would be likely to subside into its new and unaccustomed channel.

On January 29, writing from his old quarters at the Royal Hotel in Cairo, he remarked that by a curious coincidence he had been put in the same room as that which he had occupied during the memorable September of the preceding year.

* "History of the Corps of R.E.," by Colonel Sir Charles M. Watson, K.C.M.G., C.B., M.A., late R.E., vol. iii., p. 236. The R.E. Institute, Chatham. 1915.

He speaks with high appreciation of his new Chief (Sir Evelyn Wood), and in alluding to his official duties says:

"My principal work is to look after the way in which the War Minister spends the money, and keep a 'general eye' over all matters of artillery stores, etc.

"I have had plenty to do already, and find that I *must* speak Arabic. Just fancy: I was inspecting the clothing establishment to-day and had to discuss the new patterns of cloth with the director of it, a nice old gentleman who knew not a word of any European language. However, I managed to get along!

"I have seen lots of people, and have discussed lots of things.

"On February 10 there were held the sports for the Egyptian artillery—the first time, I believe, that the Egyptian soldiers have had sports!

"There was a good attendance, and everything went off satisfactorily. Several carriages were there with ladies from various harims, who seemed to look on with much interest. I should think they must rather envy the freedom of European ladies, of whom there were many.

"Lady Wood gave the prizes. The sports were got up by Colonel Duncan, who commands the artillery. He is an excellent fellow.

". . . On Friday evening I was at Lord Dufferin's. They have a nice house, but it is said not to be healthy. I have not looked much for a house; they seem hard to get, but I have no doubt we shall manage somehow."*

It was shortly after this that Watson lost his father, to whom he was devotedly attached. Mr. Watson died on April 10, 1883, in his eightieth year.

Watson's keen historical interest in his Egyptian surroundings, a trait of which we receive little more than a hint in the preceding letter, in spite of the profundity of their appeal to his exceptionally alert

* From letter of February 11, 1883.

and well-stored mind, was by no means confined to the more ancient civilization of that country. In May, 1883, he writes to his sister:

"CAIRO,
"*May* 29, 1883.

"I meant to have written to you last week, but the time failed me, as on the post-day, Tuesday, I went down with Sir Evelyn Wood to Alexandria to look at the forts.

"On Thursday we visited the forts at Aboukir and had a very interesting day.

"In the village I saw an ancient man, an Arab, whose father had often told him about the landing of the English, and also of the great sea-fight in the bay, and of the blowing up of the French ship. It seemed to bring the battle of the Nile very near to one.

"I was told there was an old woman, of over 100, who had actually seen the battle.

". . . I have got the lock of a gun which must have belonged to the English who landed under Abercrombie."

In an unusually vivid letter to his eldest sister, Watson gives a description of the house and garden at Cairo, which will help to complete the picture of his Egyptian home.

"CAIRO,
"*July* 9, 1883.

"I wish you could see me at the present moment, to get an idea of our life in Egypt.

"It is 8 o'clock in the morning, and we have just finished breakfast, and I am soon going down to the Office. I am lying in a hammock which is slung between the two pillars of the portico on the garden side of the house.*

"The garden is beautifully green and fresh-looking, and the large acacia-trees meeting overhead make a green umbrella which quite keeps off the heat.

* In a letter (to "E") of May 29, 1883, Watson writes: "Our house is very comfortable. . . . Most of the rooms are on the first floor, except the dining-room. They are good large rooms, and very cool." He appends a sketch-plan of the floor in question.

"Running up one of the trees is a little monkey which was given to G. the other day. It is a very tame animal, and seems quite as happy as if in its native wilds in the Sudan. At my feet are two white doves, also given to G. the other day. . . . In the corner of the garden is a small house where our ponies live, so that we have all our beasts close round.

"Mohammad the *Sais** is walking across the garden to the stable, and looks very picturesque in his gold-embroidered waistcoat and many-coloured sash. He is rather a good boy, Mohammad, and, what is most unusual for an Arab, is avid of work, and actually sometimes comes to ask if there is anything more to be done!

"Abdul the *Bawwab*† is watering the garden, and would make rather a nice sketch in the white shirt with his brown arms and legs showing under it.

"There is a bed of white and red roses close to me, and behind it some papyrus and palmy shrubs. I really could not have believed that we could have got so rural a spot in the middle of Cairo.

"The two houses which we can see through the trees on each side of us—Nubar Pasha's and Artin Pasha's—do not detract from the quiet of the place in the least.

"The number of birds about is wonderful. There is a rookery in the big trees, and I can see a couple of hawks sitting up above. . . . They seem harmless creatures, for I never have seen them hunting the other birds.

". . . G. has just been making our household arrangements with Khalil, the tall Arab cook, and counting out the piastres to him for the day's purchases, as the custom here is to buy everything that is wanted for each day.

"A piastre is worth a little more than a penny, and I generally give them to G. in bags of a thousand. It is rather inconvenient that there is no Egyptian coin between a 2-piastre piece and a pound, which is worth 200! There used to be half-pounds, but I never see them now. They don't coin any more here, and there will soon be no money at all in the country, except foreign coins. . . .

* Groom. † "Gatekeeper."

" I can forgive the Egyptians for their easy way of living. I could swing in this hammock all day quite pleasantly; but as there is an Office, I must be off to it, so call *Ya, Mohammad! hatt el hisan,** and will bring this meandering description to a conclusion."

The social circle in which the Watsons at this time moved was indeed most varied and interesting. Occupying, as he did, one of the most onerous and responsible positions in the reorganized Government, he was in close daily touch with all the leading officials, his friends including many prominent Egyptians, as well as Europeans.

It was, indeed, partly on principle that, like Gordon himself and others of his school, Watson sought to bridge over the gulf between East and West, and made every effort to learn as much as possible of the country to which he was for the time being accredited, and to cultivate and understand its people.

Can there be any real doubt in these days, that he and others who thought like him were right on this point, and that the easier up-to-date method of leading what is to all intents a purely " European" life in the East leads to perverted and quite mistaken views of a Government officer's duty towards the people of the country in which he lives? At all events, this fashion would appear very largely to account for the slowly widening breach between the governors and the governed that had been growing for years before the War in too many of the great native dependencies of this Empire, though it is profoundly to be hoped that present experiences will to some extent purge their public services of the type of officer who should never have been required to serve outside Europe.

We have now abundant proof that a generous and sympathetic interest in our human surroundings,

* " Ho there, Mohammad! Bring the horse."

in the course of administering our rule, brings precisely those advantages which manifest themselves most signally in time of trouble.

A brilliant example of the merits of this policy was, indeed, furnished by the success of the famous "Ride to Cairo," when Watson's easy familiarity with the language, his experience of the country, and, above all, his sympathy with the people, enabled him to arrange for the surrender of the Citadel in circumstances which in the absence of such advantages would have been certain to lead to an unfortunate if not to a disastrous conclusion.

We have seen how it enabled him to command a newly surrendered officer of Arabi's own army to turn out the garrison of the fort on the Mokattam Heights and bring him the keys.

And we have seen how it assisted him in carrying out his ride through the most dangerous of the Cairo streets, on the very night of the capture of the city, in the sole company of a rebel officer.

We shall not, after this, be surprised to learn that even in his ordinary administrative work Watson was an adept in securing the harmonious and not infrequently zealous co-operation of the native officials, and that similarly in his social relations, which he regarded as being scarcely less important, he was always a conciliating element and a link between the two races—a fact to which the brief but none the less extraordinary success of his policy of pacification during his governorship of the Red Sea Littoral would afford conclusive testimony.

This guiding principle of all his activities in Egypt also explains why in his "Cairo Album," a collection of photographs of his contemporaries in that country, we find the portraits of so many of the prominent Egyptian Officials of those days with those of his European colleagues, although these latter included

all the more responsible elements of the mixed Government, from Lord Dufferin downwards.

Watson's life in Egypt was, as will be readily imagined, above all a busy one, and the Watsons kept open house in Cairo, though it must be remembered that the Cairo society of those days was very different from what it afterwards became—the counterpart of the society that down to the beginning of the War was to be found in the Riviera.

Sir Evelyn Wood, Sir E. Malet, and later Sir E. Baring and Sir Colin Scott-Moncrieff, were also among those who kept open house there.

Cairo society also included, at this time, the members of the Diplomatic Corps and their families, the Archdeacon (Butcher), and a small and select number of Circassians and Armenians (*e.g.*, Nubar Pasha, Sherriff and Riaz, Yakub Artin Pasha* (who afterwards became Under-Secretary of Education), with some Egyptians of the higher class.

There were also periodical receptions at the Khedivial Palace, which were *de rigueur*.

Watson saw much of his own subordinates at the War Office, and it was always his wish that his wife should visit the wives and families of his Egyptian employés of the middle and lower classes.

In his few spare moments the Watsons would ride on their Cyprus ponies through Old Cairo to the desert.

Among his Cairo friends and acquaintances was his brother-sapper, the late Lord Kitchener, with whom Watson corresponded on the most friendly terms. In one such letter Kitchener, while accepting an invitation to join a musical club, has recorded the amusing fact that he—the " K. of K." *in futuro*— " could not sing "!

* Artin Pasha, being an Armenian and therefore a Christian, had to remain Under-Secretary, since the head of the department was required to belong to the Mohammedan religion.

It will be convenient to conclude our account of this Cairo period of Watson's Egyptian service with a reference to the deep and keen interest taken by Watson in Cairene archæology.

Of this side of Watson's character it may be remarked that probably at no time of his life was he more keenly interested in archæological research, more particularly in that side of it which had special reference to Egypt. In a letter to his mother (dated June 29) he wrote:

" Egypt has so much of interest that if one was here for a hundred years one could not see it all. Petrie, of whose explorations at Zoan you saw an account in *The Times*, has just come back from there, having stopped work for the summer, and was telling me to-day of all he had found there. . . . Have you ever read Wilkinson's ' Ancient Egyptians '? It is a most interesting book. I am reading it now."

It is easy to understand that to any intellect so disciplined as was Watson's, not only the entire country of Egypt, but the Sudan as well, must have teemed with interest. In his case, however, the historical appeal of the country to his higher faculties differed widely from its effect upon the conventional Egyptian enthusiast; for Watson's interest was above all practical as well as philosophical, and an example of this is afforded by his rescue of the now famous fourteenth-century mosque of Sultan Nasir at Cairo from the terrible state of neglect into which it had fallen.

This old royal mosque, which stands at the centre of Cairo Citadel, had received (as Watson remarks*) less attention than it deserved, most likely because it had long ceased to be used as a mosque, and had been quite thrown into the shade by the great mosque

* In his paper, written at Suakin in May, 1886, and printed in vol. xviii., pt. 4, of the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*.

of Mohammad Ali Pasha. After being used for many years as a prison, it had been subdivided and used as a military storehouse. From this condition it was rescued by Watson, who in consequence of his position in the Egyptian War Office, with the co-operation of the Officer-in-Charge of the military prisoners,* was able to get the whole of the stores removed and the partition walls themselves taken down, wherever this could be done with safety. He also had photographs taken of the mosque's most interesting architectural features. And these services were crowned by the writing of his paper,† in which he was able to show that the building of this once wonderful mosque, with its superb dome, had been quite erroneously attributed to Salah-ed-Din, since it was really built by Sultan Nasir, as late as A.D. 1318, as is proved by the Arabic inscription over the principal entrance, which Watson had translated. In view of its magnificent proportions and high historical as well as architectural interest, Watson's rescue of this mosque was a notable service to the local archæology.

This particular year (1885) ends with a letter from Watson to Sir Charles Wilson which is most honourably characteristic in showing that thoughtfulness for and sympathy with his native colleagues which he regarded as part of his duty.

His letter ran as follows:

"CAIRO,
"*December* 27, 1885.

". . . It seems to me a little hard upon the Egyptians that they have had so little recognition for their doings during the war, and it seems to me that Gordon was sometimes rather hard upon them. Look at Ahmad Effar, the Mudir of Kassala, who stuck to

* Captain William Freeman, of the Royal Sussex Regiment.
† Referred to *ante*.

his post as bravely as Gordon himself, and has ended by dying there, massacred by the rebels! I shall never forget his answer to the letter sent him to tell him to escape, if he could, last April. He replied that he 'refused to leave his post and [his] charge.' That letter came just about the same time when Lord E. Fitzmaurice stated, in answer to a question in the House, that 'the relief of Kassala does not come within the sphere of the projected military operations!'"

It is obvious that these views of Watson were not a mere pious expression of opinion on his part, and further evidence to this effect may be seen in the great care and pains that Watson took, after Gordon's death, in securing promotion for Gordon's officers.*

In June, 1883, Watson was invited to become a member of the Commission which had been appointed to consider the proposed line of railway to the Sudan, the first meeting of which was held on June 11 at the Cairo War Office.

Watson was, in fact, at this time the right-hand man of Sir Evelyn Wood, and he may also be described as being the "handy man" of the Egyptian Government.

Though the Sirdar was ultimately responsible for the general policy of reconstruction, the actual details were worked out by Watson, to the supreme value of whose services Sir Evelyn Wood was always most generously willing to bear testimony.

The truly Herculean and, indeed, amazing volume of Watson's work at this period could, however, only

* On June 24, 1885, Watson wrote to Sir C. Wilson that "as regards the promotion of Gordon's officers" he "had already confirmed the grades of a number of them," and added: "*I think if anyone felt he was omitted, he would come to me.* If there is any other officer in particular whom you wish looked after, please let me know his name." (The italics are ours.)

be adequately realized from a perusal of some such document as his own account of the reorganization of the Egyptian Army, a memorandum of which he drew up for submission to Sir H. D. Wolff in 1885.

In the summer of 1885 a difficulty arose in connection with the promotion of British Army officers in the Egyptian Police and gendarmerie force, the settlement of which, small matter as it may seem, required all the stubborn strength of Watson's character.

A number of officers in the Police Force, in defiance of the arrangements made, for which Watson was responsible, were promoted, during his absence from Cairo, to various military grades, without any mention whatever being made of the fact that these grades were in the Police and not in the Army.

This matter was the more serious since Watson was at this time acting for the Sirdar; and since such promotions were bound to be obnoxious to the Army, Watson felt himself compelled by way of protest to resign his Khedivial Commission immediately.

This decisive action produced the required effect, an accommodation was reached, and Watson withdrew his resignation.

During the Nile Expedition of 1885, with its tragically abortive ending, Watson was deputed to act at Cairo as Sirdar during the absence up the river of Sir Evelyn Wood.

The Egyptian Army Order containing the appointment was dated from the Cairo War Office on August 12: " During the absence of H.E. the Sirdar, Colonel Watson will represent him in all matters."

The combination of duties which was thus thrust upon his almost too willing shoulders must have given Watson what was probably the most arduous, though not perhaps otherwise the most remark-

able, period of even his arduous and remarkable career.

Essential, however, as his work at the base was to the well-being of the troops engaged on active service, the want of his services at the front was even more keenly felt by the leaders of the Expedition, and the consequence was that in August he was sent for by Sir Evelyn Wood to proceed to the front, a special service for which his previous work in the Sudan under Gordon, his complete familiarity with the country, its people, and its officials, and his tried knowledge of the native dialect, would all have combined, it might have been thought, to make his claim irresistible.

But the Cairo authorities considered that their claim on his services outweighed the claim of Sir E. Wood, and put an end to any hopes that Watson might justly have entertained, since he was refused permission to leave Cairo until Sir Evelyn Wood's own return. "So I missed the campaign" is his truly stoical comment!

On the return of the Expedition, Watson was in due course warmly recommended by Sir E. Wood for promotion, on account of his distinguished services at the base, where he had most reluctantly remained by order during the absence of the Sirdar for whom he was acting.

Sir E. Wood's recommendation was founded on the fact that as base commandant Watson had, in fact, successfully supplied all the *munitions de guerre et de bouche*, which had been required by the Expedition throughout the trying ordeal through which it had passed.

That this was not too high praise could be proved from Watson's correspondence alone. General Sir F. Stephenson was constantly consulting him about such matters as "barracks in Upper Egypt for

English troopers;" about "appointing a second-in-command at Suakin;" about a "list of guns at Alexandria and round the coast;" about "sending up troops towed in dahabias to Assuan — can you manage this?" etc., etc. The cordiality of his relations with General Grenfell (afterwards Lord Grenfell) was no less marked—*e.g.*, on May 13, 1885, when Grenfell wrote to Baring that Watson had "full powers to act for me during my absence," and to Watson: "I am so grateful for all you have done and are doing for me."

Watson's "Record" states that in March, 1885, "Sir E. Wood recommended me for a Brevet-Lieutenant-Colonelcy," but that this recommendation was set aside *on the ground that he had not been up the Nile.*

"This was not my fault," is his ironical comment, "as [I was] ordered . . . to remain in Cairo."

He did, however, receive (in April, 1885) the Order of the Osmanieh (Third Class), and in July of this same year he was made a Pasha (*Lewa*, or Major-General) in the Egyptian Army.

A few months later, in the early autumn of 1885, an amusing letter of congratulation on his promotion reached Watson from Kitchener. It was dated from the London Club to which they jointly belonged (the Junior United Service Club) on September 12, 1885. Kitchener wrote:

"MY DEAR WATSON,

". . . Long live the Pasha! May Your Excellency enjoy every bliss, and flourish like the palm in which the doves sit and sing their love-songs.

"I have not written before, as I had little or nothing to tell. Sir D. Wolff has all Egypt in hand, so that I have heard nothing but rumours. Ismail—Ex-

Khedive's—party are working heaven and earth to turn out Tewfik, but I doubt much their succeeding, as no one feels they can trust Ismail except those who touch his *billets de banque*. . . .

"Yours ever,

"H. H. KITCHENER."

CHAPTER VIII

THE FATE OF GORDON

(1884)

We must now consider the main stream of events the current of which had been flowing full tide during these three years of Watson's life in Cairo.

On the departure of Gordon from the Sudan in 1880, the equitable régime which he had inaugurated was soon swept away by the rapacious Egyptian Pashas who succeeded him, and who exacted a pound for themselves on every pound of tax which they "collected" for the Egyptian Government.

The "Mahdist" rebellion under Mohammad Ahmad of Dongola in May, 1881, was provoked entirely by the desperation of the people, who repeatedly claimed that it was "not a religious war, but a war against bad government," as personified, for the time being, in the above-mentioned Egyptian officials.

The means at this time available to the Egyptian Government for quelling so formidable a movement were hopelessly inadequate, and the destruction of the hastily improvised army of 11,000 men under Hicks Pasha at the beginning of November, 1883, was the inevitable outcome of a forcible-feeble policy. But the event, however much it was to be anticipated, was nevertheless a terrible shock when it did come, and carried consternation for a moment even into Cairo.

In a letter of November 25, Watson writes with his almost preternatural calm:

"There has been bad news from the Sudan this week, a report having come from Khartum that Hicks Pasha has been defeated, and he and all his troops killed.

"I doubt it is quite as bad as that, knowing how fearful and fond of exaggerating the Egyptians are.

"But it has had one good effect, that the departure of the English troops has been stopped for the present. It is rather amusing that they have had to do that in less than a fortnight after Gladstone's speech at the Mansion House!"*

The situation caused by the defeat of Hicks Pasha, which was more serious than Watson perhaps at first realized, steadily developed.

On December 9 he wrote to his mother:

"I cannot feel very sorry that a bad Government, like the Egyptian Government in the Sudan, should be upset, though, of course, I am very sorry for Hicks and the other Englishmen who have been killed up there. Since Gordon left the Sudan (in 1880) it has been getting worse and worse, and the present state of affairs is only the natural result. Unless England will help in governing the Sudan, or take it into her own hands, it would be better for Egypt to lose it altogether.

"The present state of affairs gives me extra work, as I have a good deal to do with regard to the men who are going to Suakin with General Baker,† who starts next week to try and open up the road to Berber."

The result of Baker's gallant but ill-fated attempt to open up this very road, and the "disastrous defeat" of his troops (the nucleus of which had been

* Mr. Gladstone's speech at the Lord Mayor's Banquet early in November, 1883, at which he announced that a large reduction would be made in the number of the British troops serving in Egypt.

† *I.e.*, General Valentine Baker.

formed from the semi-official gendarmerie, whose duties should in strictness have been confined to Egypt proper) at the Wells of Teb near Trinkitat on February 5, are part of the world's history of this truly calamitous epoch of Egyptian affairs.

Gordon was at Brussels on January 17, making arrangements for his projected mission to the Congo, on behalf of the King of the Belgians, when he was recalled to London by an urgent telegram from the Government of the day.

On the following morning he interviewed them in London, and the same evening started for the Sudan, with a mission to withdraw, or rescue if need be, the endangered garrisons.

Towards the end of January Gordon's arrival in Egypt was being eagerly expected, and Watson makes reference to this in writing to his mother on January 28.

It had been decided to intercept Gordon at Port Said, and to bring him up, if possible, to Cairo; and of course Watson, being Gordon's principal friend in Egypt, was wanted for this occasion:

"On Wednesday morning I went down with Sir Evelyn Wood to Port Said to meet Gordon and bring him up to Cairo.*

"We got there about midnight, and he arrived from Brindisi the next morning with Colonel Stewart,† who is going to the Sudan with him.

"As we had a steamer waiting for him and a special train from Ismailia, we got up to Cairo at 9 o'clock. We stopped with Sir Evelyn Wood.

"The next two days were fully occupied in getting

* This was really due to a change of plan with regard to Gordon's original instructions from the Home Government, who had arranged for him to proceed direct to Suakin. At Cairo Gordon was commissioned to be Governor-General of the Sudan with full powers, and started at once for Khartum by the Nile Korosko-Berber route, reaching Khartum by steamer from Berber.

† See note, p. 161.

things ready for him to start to the Sudan, and he left for Khartum on Saturday evening.

"I am indeed glad he has come; it is the one hope for the Sudan. I have been wishing for it for the last year, as things went from bad to worse. It was a great relief to me when he had really started. . . .

"You can easily understand that Gordon looked better than I had seen him for a long time."

It may be noted that all the immediate preparations for what was doomed to be Gordon's last journey to the Sudan were made by the Watsons, and all his requirements in the matter of outfit were seen to by them, down to the most minute particulars.

Indeed, Watson's docket contains complete lists of the articles purchased for Gordon at this period (necessaries of all kinds, stores, tools, even underclothing), all of which were duly paid for by Gordon afterwards on his arrival at Khartum.

It is certain that Watson was, above all others, the one man in Cairo whom Gordon cared about most, and that he was the last to see Gordon off when he started. It should also be stated that Watson himself offered to accompany Gordon, in which case he would have shared the horrors of the subsequent siege of Khartum, but Gordon positively refused on principle to take Watson, because he was married.

All Gordon's interviews—*e.g.*, with the Sultan of Darfur and other notables—during his brief sojourn in Cairo took place in the Watsons' *selamlik*, and everything that could in the circumstances be done for Gordon was done for him by Watson and his wife.

Gordon reached Khartum without much difficulty, and wrote cheerily and even hopefully from there to Watson.

But the *dénouement* of the terrible drama which was being played at this time in the Sudan through the folly of self-blinded Home politicians proceeded from act to act with the grim and unfaltering certitude—nay, even at times with the prophetic and inexorable irony of an Æschylean tragedy,—and neither the sacrifice of Hicks's army, nor of Baker's expedition, nor of the devoted garrisons that were starved and massacred in slow succession by the treacherous and bloodthirsty foe, without the raising of a finger on their behalf by those for whom they fought, and in whose honour they had trusted—not even Gordon's own superb self-sacrifice in the same cause could avail to open those blinded eyes or to avert the consequences that were forced upon the Sudan, in the supposed interest of Home politics—and the European bondholder.

On the other hand, we must not allow ourselves to imagine if we wish to be fair to the chief actors in this great drama, that the shadow of coming events had as yet become more than a flickering premonitory gloom, which affected the spirits even of British officers serving in Egypt unequally and according to temperament; more especially as it was felt that whatever the peril, it was at least remote. So late as the beginning of February Watson wrote to his sister:

"CAIRO,
"*February* 4, 1884.

" . . . Gordon's coming out has helped to quiet people's minds—not that they are much disturbed here. You see, it is a long way from Cairo to the Sudan. So far Gordon goes on well, and the Sudan people are telegraphing to express their pleasure that he is going back to them."

A warning letter from the Sudan, which reached Watson just a fortnight later, must, however, have

had its effect even upon his equanimity; at all events, in transmitting it to the Sirdar, he couples it with a sufficiently grave warning:

"WAR OFFICE,
"*February* 18, 1884.

"EXCELLENCY,

"I enclose copy of a telegram which has just reached me from Aswan, which tends to show that there is a feeling against the English in Upper Egypt. I have also received information from another person who has a special knowledge of the country that there is a certain amount of danger to be apprehended in Upper Egypt.

"He states that he believes that the Mudirs and Egyptian Government officials are endeavouring to spread a feeling among the lower classes hostile to the English, and recommends that an Englishman should be sent at once to each Mudiriat to watch events and report to the authorities in Cairo.

"He also urges that it would be most desirable to send some English troops to Upper Egypt. It must not be forgotten that the chance of pacifying the Sudan and checking the religious feeling from spreading into Egypt proper depends at the present moment on the life of one man, General Gordon.

"If any accident were to happen to him, or if the force going to Suakin to relieve Tokar were to meet with a reverse, the consequences to Egypt would probably be very serious.

"I would venture to suggest the advisability of sending English troops up the Nile with the least possible delay. It must not be forgotten that the river is now falling, and that if it should be necessary to act later on in the year, it will then be very difficult to send up the troops. At least one battalion should go to Assiout and two to Aswan, with some mountain guns and mounted infantry, and it would be for consideration whether some place intermediate between the two should not also be occupied. A fort should be constructed at each place where troops are placed.

"I would also urge the advisability of sending

English officers to all the Mudiriats in Upper Egypt. Perhaps it would be premature to appoint them as Mudirs, but their presence, either as Chiefs of Police or in some other responsible position, is very necessary.

"Their presence would doubtless have a good effect, and they would be able to ascertain the feeling among the people.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,
"Your obedient servant,
"C. M. WATSON."

The disaster to General Baker's force, to which reference has been made, was followed within about three weeks by the advance of General Sir Gerald Graham's Expedition, which was ordered to relieve, if possible, the Egyptian garrison at Tokar.

The necessity of this fresh effort must have seemed all the more imperative since the additional tragedy of the Egyptian garrison at Ṣinkat, which, after being reduced to subsist for a while on horse-skins, had been massacred, its most loyal and valorous commander, Tewfik Pasha, having been slain, with his whole force, in a last desperate effort to cut their way through the beleaguering ring of rebels.

Watson, however, meanwhile, remained on the whole hopeful, though the excitement of the preparations for the Tokar Expedition must no doubt have come as a great relief to his anxiety.

Watson to his Mother.

"CAIRO,
"*February* 18, 1884.

"This last has been rather an exciting week, with the preparation for sending the English expedition to Suakin, which we all here look upon as got up in order to save the Government from being turned out.

"Had the English troops been sent there a year ago, as ought to have been done, all the lives might have been saved.

"But I suppose Mr. Gladstone does not care for that, if he can save a vote in Parliament now.

"Altogether the Government have succeeded in raising a great deal of ill-feeling here, which is a pity, but not surprising. I hope that the expedition will succeed, but there are many things about it which are ill-advised.

"I see that some of the English papers have been abusing Sir Evelyn Wood about Baker's defeat, but all they say is quite false, as I have good reason to know. Baker was certain to fail, as his soldiers* would not fight."

It must be remembered that General Valentine Baker's army, to which this letter alludes, was not the Egyptian Army, but a miscellaneous horde—a mere rabble, improvised from the gendarmerie into some semblance of an army for the occasion: with the most marvellous speed, it may be granted, but still a mere mob, untrained and, worse than all, largely driven to fight entirely against their will.

A week later Cairo was impatiently awaiting news of Graham.

"CAIRO,
"*February* 25, 1884.

". . . We are expecting news to-morrow of the Tokar Expedition. I do hope it will be a success . . . but it ought to have been sent long before. . . .

"I shall be glad to get the new book about Gordon. It is said to be good. He gets on well so far, and will, I hope, succeed; but no man ever had a harder job!"

When it did come the news was none of the best, for the effort to save Tokar had failed, although on

* Gendarmerie.

this occasion there were at least some redeeming features.

The assembling of this fresh force, in the terrible straits to which Egypt had been reduced—from debt, from her own internal strife, and from the late cholera epidemic, in so short a time as three weeks—was indeed a marvellous effort; and although they failed in their object of relieving the Tokar garrison, which had been compelled to surrender before they left Trinkitat, the two complete victories near Tokar (before the recapture of that place), and afterwards on March 13 near Tamasi, achieved by the British troops under Graham, after desperate fighting, over Osman Digna did much to re-establish equilibrium for the moment.

On March 6 came a letter from Gordon, which suggests that some uncertainty as to the generally promising outlook was present in his mind while writing.

"KHARTUM,
"*March* 6, 1884.

"MY DEAR WATSON,

"Thanks for two letters which I received to-day, and for all the kindness you and Mrs. Watson showed to us, and all the trouble you took. Kindly let me know how I stand with you in respect to money, and I will send you a telegram for the same.

"We are all right up here, and things look improving, though we can never tell from moment to moment what may turn up.

"Thank you for Gessi's* papers. I have got all three. Khartum is fast emptying of Cairo employés, not from fear, but because they see their places are being filled up by Sudanese employés.

"It is a wretched place at best of times, as you know, and you can imagine it now, with all trade at standstill.

"Graham's victory has aided me greatly, and I

* Gordon's well-known Lieutenant.

expect the Hadendowa revolt is at an end. Kindest regards to Mrs. Watson and yourself.

"Believe me, my dear Watson,
"Yours sincerely,
"C. G. GORDON."

The doubts in Gordon's mind now began to reflect themselves in Watson's own letters:

Watson to his Mother.

"CAIRO,
"*March* 10, 1884.

". . . So far he [Gordon] seems to get on well, but I often wonder whether he will succeed in his present job, which is certainly the most difficult thing he has ever had to do—and dangerous, too! We have not much news from Suakin, and it is not known whether General Graham will have another fight with the Arabs or not. The policy of England with regard to Egypt is most unsatisfactory, selfish and cowardly.

"The people do not know what to expect. We do little for them, and do not allow them to do anything for themselves. The people in England—at least, the majority—seem quite blind about things here. . . .

"I was much surprised to see blame cast on Sir E. Wood, and in a way, too, that was absolutely untrue; for example, about General Baker saying that he did nothing to help him—when he did everything—but as we know here nothing could have made Baker's expedition succeed.

"You say that I seem to take matters easily, but the fact is I try to do my own work as well as I can, and I have plenty to do. You see, I work altogether with Egyptians, so I can do some little for them, and all the talk and trouble is to a great extent outside me. You know it is not my habit to worry about things I cannot help.* I try to make my Office a

* This almost stoical calmness of Watson's was certainly not due to indifference. For instance, in reference to Gordon he wrote (June 1, 1884) to Sir E. Wood: "As you know, I would

kind of school of honesty and justice, two things rather needed here, and which are appreciated by the people.

"You would be amused to see the variety of people who come into my room, as I let in all who want to come—merchants, poor men, widows of soldiers killed in the war, Turks, etc.—all kinds of languages going at once!

"I have to talk English, Arabic, French, German, one after the other, and sometimes all at once—which is a little confusing at times!

"I do not know what they will do about the Egyptian Army, which was going on very well indeed, but is in a fair way to be spoiled by all the nonsense which has been talked about it in England, which has dispirited men and officers a good deal. It does not do to pull a thing up by the roots to see how it is growing."

One of the secrets of Watson's success in life was that he accepted the facts of the present, good, bad, or indifferent, just as they might occur, with complete equanimity, and was thus able to concentrate the whole of his efforts, though not, perhaps, the whole of his attention, upon his own sufficiently responsible and laborious duties.

He therefore took more quietly than most people the successive disasters that had already fallen upon the Egyptian arms at this time in the Sudan, and attributed the alarm which they produced in England to the sensation-mongering tactics of certain newspapers of the English Press.

To this must be added the fact that Watson was on principle an optimist, in the same sense in which

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do anything for General Gordon. It is very distressing to me, stopping comfortably in Cairo, while he is in the midst of his great difficulties in the Sudan." And as we have seen, he had actually volunteered to go with him, but had been generously refused by Gordon himself.

that term would be applied to our gallant and cheery "Tommies" of to-day.

Despite his reassured calmness, however, it was already abundantly clear, even in far-distant Cairo, that the position was continually growing graver at Khartum, where the early hopes founded on Gordon's return to the Sudan had now completely disappeared.

The Mahdi's refusal of Gordon's offers and his subsequent investment of the town were followed by the failure of Gordon's first sortie, and later on by the massacre of Colonel Stewart and his companions in their fruitless attempt to reach Dongola by steamer.*

The Nile Expedition in whale-boats, which were not even ordered in England till the month of August, was the outcome of the growing conviction, which forced itself at last upon even the mind of the most obdurate of the Pharaohs that ever sat in Downing Street, that nothing but military aid, and that, too, sent *at an early date*, could save Khartum.

Much time had, of course, elapsed before the full danger was realized in Cairo, but at the beginning of July Watson no longer cherished any illusions about Gordon's position.

* This was not, of course, Sir Herbert Stewart (who fell afterwards at Abuklea), but Gordon's right-hand man, of whom Sir Charles Wilson says in a letter to Watson of January 6, 1898, that "he was specially selected by Gordon, and was ordered to accompany him, as his chief Staff officer, at four or five hours' notice. He was in some ways as remarkable a man as Gordon, having the same contempt for death and the same chivalrous devotion to duty. His friends and admirers, who are many, have always felt that his views on the situation in the Sudan were accurate." It is pleasant to be able to give these remarks about Gordon's trusted colleague and fellow-worker.

"CAIRO,
"*July* 8, 1884.

". . . Is it not sad about Khartum? I dare say Mr. Gladstone is angry with Gordon because he did not let it be taken six months ago, before the expedition started. Now they cannot draw back.

"We have as yet no news as to whether Gordon is alive or not, and it is impossible to give an opinion on the subject.

". . . Sir Evelyn Wood is no longer going to be the Sirdar; General Grenfell will take his place.

". . . We have just heard that an expedition is to go by Suakin. At last! Just two years after it should have started.

"I remember this month two years ago telling Lord Dufferin that the English Government would have to send an expedition from Suakin to Berber. He said nothing would induce them to do it. I said they would have to do it, whether they liked it or not!

"It is a pity that they are starting now, at the end of the good season instead of at the beginning, as General Stephenson wanted."

Early in August Watson received a letter (of the 8th) from Kitchener at Dongola, asking whether there was any message that he wished to be sent to Gordon: "I think I can get men through now."

This was followed by another letter of October 5, which also came from Kitchener, this time, however, from Debbeh, in which Kitchener states that he had received instructions "from Baring"* to do what he could for Stewart's party and to save Berber from being burnt.

He further remarked that when, in order to effect this, he applied for the command of the local native troops and for permission to proceed with them to meet Stewart, he was referred to military headquarters for his orders, this fresh application also meeting with refusal—the result being the massacre.

* Later, Lord Cromer.

The following two letters reached Watson from Gordon himself during this last phase of a career at the close of which the entire civilized world looked on aghast, helpless, and unspeakably indignant.

"KHARTUM,
"*November* 26, 1884.

"MY DEAR WATSON,

"Thanks for your letter which I received yesterday. The steamer which brought it had to run the gauntlet of no end of rifle fire and of six guns; she was struck three times by shells, but only seven were wounded. I hope you and Mrs. Watson are well. I am not ill-treated, I consider, but the Cairo people up here—they are the ill-used. I will accept *nothing whatsoever* from Gladstone's Government. I will not even let them pay my expenses. I will get the King to pay them. I will never put foot in England again, but will (D.V., if I get out) go to Brussels and so on to Congo. How is Miss Arnott, the lady who was with you? I greatly fear for Stewart, Power, and Harbin, French Consul. With kindest regards,

"Believe me,

"Yours sincerely, with kindest regards to Mrs. Watson,

"C. E. GORDON."

"KHARTUM,
"*December* 14, 1884.

"MY DEAR WATSON,

"I think the game is up, and send Mrs. Watson, you, and Graham, my adieux. We may expect a catastrophe in the town on or after ten days' time; this would not have happened (if it does happen) if our people had taken better precautions as to informing us of their movements, but this is 'spilt milk.' Good-bye. Mind and let my brother (68, Elm Park Road, Chelsea) know what I owe you.

"Yours sincerely,

"C. E. GORDON."

The upshot of the story may be told in Watson's own words, as they appeared in a pamphlet called the "Campaign of Gordon's Steamers," which was published in the *R.E. Journal* of October 1, 1885. From this we may quote:

"Lord Wolseley reached Korti on December 16, three days after General Gordon had written, '*If some effort is not made before ten days' time, the town will fall.*' It is inexplicable, this delay. If the Expeditionary steamers have reached the river and met my steamers, one hundred men are all that we require, just to show themselves.'

"But *thirty-nine* days elapsed after he wrote this before the troops met the steamer, and Gordon's worst predictions were thus verified. The gallant effort of Sir Charles Wilson to reach Khartum in time failed, because the Expedition reached Metemmeh too late."

A little later on, at p. 27 of the same pamphlet, Watson wrote:

"Gordon sent her (the *Bordeen*) back on December 15 with the last post that ever left Khartum. She took the last volume of his Journal, which concluded as follows: '*Now mark* this: if the Expeditionary Force, and I ask for no more than 200 men, does not come in ten days the town may fall, and I have done my best for the honour of our country. Good-bye.

"'C. G. GORDON.'"

In his Life of Sir Charles Wilson, Watson gave the story of one yet later message from Gordon, which, he says, was not generally known.*

"An Egyptian clerk who was taken prisoner at the fall of Khartum, and did not escape from the Dervishes

* "Life of Major-General Sir Charles Wilson." By Colonel Sir Charles Watson. London: John Murray. 1909. *V.* pp. 313-314.

until long afterwards, had kept a copy of an Arabic message which he said that Gordon had dictated to him about December 29, 1884. The original was written on a very small piece of paper, which Gordon concealed in a rifle cartridge and gave to a messenger to take to Dongola. So far as is known, this messenger never arrived.

" The translation of this message was as follows:

" 'TO THE SOVEREIGNS OF THE KINGDOMS.

" 'I would, at once, calling to mind what I have gone through, inform their Majesties of the actions of Great Britain and the Ottoman Empire, who appointed me as Governor-General of the Sudan for the purpose of appeasing the rebellion in that country.

" 'During the twelve months that I have been here these two Powers, the one remarkable for her wealth and the other for her military force, have remained unaffected by my situation.

" 'Although I, personally, am too insignificant to be taken into account, the Powers were bound, nevertheless, to fulfil the engagement upon which my appointment was based, so as to shield the honour of their Governments.

" 'What I have gone through I cannot describe. The Almighty God will help me.' "

March, 1885, brought a further letter from Kitchener, dated this time from Korti on the 17th of the month, in which he refers to the grim tragedy that had so recently been enacted at Khartum, saying that he was never so shocked as when the end came, " and that it had taken the heart and soul out of the Sudan for him."

It appears from this letter that Kitchener's belief was that the troubles in the Sudan were not in reality due to Mohammedan religious fever, but that the whole business was really due to the " ambitions of individuals."

In April, 1885, a letter from Kitchener (curiously

misdated April, 1884) reached Watson from Aswan, in which Kitchener remarked that he hoped that the "horror of Gordon's blood" would keep some of the Cairo authorities "from getting a night's rest in the future."

Another of Watson's correspondents at this period, Colonel Sir F. T. Edwards, R.E., who wrote to Watson about this same time (March 18, 1885), remarks of Gordon's death:

"I am sorry to think how you must mourn him. The facsimile enclosures in your letter were very interesting, so much so that I have sent them to the Queen,* who so deeply deplores his loss, and that of so many of the brave officers and men."

Watson's subsequent letters naturally contain repeated references to Gordon's fate.

"WAR OFFICE, CAIRO,
"*March* 27, 1885.

"I thought you might like to have a copy of Gordon's last letters, so enclose them. If anyone else cares for them, I will send some more, as I have had them lithographed, and have several copies left. I see that one of them has been published in several of the papers. Probably Sir Henry Gordon, to whom I sent a copy, gave it.

"I have just had an interesting letter from Sir Charles Wilson, describing his advance to Khartum. He seems to think that there is no doubt at all that Gordon was killed, and not taken prisoner, as some people suggested.

"It is a pity that Lord Wolseley's Expedition has up to the present been such a total failure. Of

* Colonel Edwards was at this time Equerry to the Queen, which explains why this letter was dated from "Buckingham Palace."

course, the Arabs now believe that he has had to run away. . . ."

A later (explanatory) reference to Gordon's diaries occurs in a letter which Watson wrote to his mother from Cairo on July 7, 1885:

" . . . I have just finished reading Gordon's diaries, which are very interesting. I think it is a pity that they have cut out a great deal of what he said about the Government, while leaving in his remarks about Baring.

" Now, Baring [afterwards Lord Cromer] really wanted to help him, and the Government would not let him."

In later years Watson gave in an article, which appeared in the *R.E. Journal* (June 1, 1892), under the title of " How Gordon was Lost—a Reply," a full and reasoned account of his views as to the real cause, or causes, which led to the death of Gordon, though this was, of course, but one out of innumerable occasions when he championed either Gordon himself or the cause for which Gordon fell.

In his " Life of Major-General Sir Charles Wilson " (1909), Watson has left on record a powerful defence of Wilson's action in the matter of the Gordon Relief Expedition, the chief points of which are summed up in his Preface to that work as follows:

" When serving under Lord Dufferin in Egypt, Wilson was brought into close connection with the Sudan question and the mission of General Gordon, and did his best, though, unfortunately, in vain, to induce the British Government to take a serious view of the situation. With his intimate knowledge of the subject it was heart-breaking to realize the coming evils, and yet to be unable to do anything to avert them.

" In the Nile Expedition of 1884 he held the important post of Chief of the Intelligence Department.

In consequence of the unjustifiable attempt which was made at the time to lead the public to believe that he was responsible for the failure to relieve Khartum before it was captured by the Mahdi, it has been necessary to enter at some length into the real causes which led to the non-success of the Expedition, which may be summarized as follows:*

" (i.) The refusal to allow General Sir G. Graham to open the Suakin-Berber road in March, 1884.
" (ii.) The delay in authorizing an expedition for the relief of Khartum.
" (iii.) The loss of time due to the decision to wait for boats to be built in England.
" (iv.) The policy adopted with regard to the Mudir of Dongola.
" (v.) The neglect to provide sufficient camels for the desert march.
" (vi.) The halt of the desert column at Yakdul.

" These causes . . . led to a delay of more than nine months."

It is particularly noticeable that the failure to open the Suakin-Berber road occupies the first place on this brief epitome of the causes of failure.

The significance of the distinction given to this fact comes from Watson's own sagacity in being one of the first to realize that the opening up of this road and the establishment of a Sudanese port, in substitution for the officially recognized Nile route to the Sudan, was the true key to the solution of the then white-hot problem of the government of that great Dependency.

It is singularly easy to see now how the subsequent development of events led to the confirmation

* Wilson's own account of the Expedition, based on his diary " From Korti to Khartum," is referred to at p. 296 and elsewhere in Watson's Life of Wilson.

of this remarkably sapient forecast on Watson's part. In all respects the views for which Watson and the school of officers to which he belonged so long and unsuccessfully contended have since received entire corroboration.

CHAPTER IX

THE RED SEA COMMAND
(1886)

EARLY in February of the following year (1886) Watson received the following letter from his friend Sir Charles Warren, who had only just been appointed Governor-General of the Red Sea Littoral at Suakin:

Sir Charles Warren to Colonel Watson.

"SUAKIN,
"*February* 24, 1886.

". . . It is so very difficult to get accurate information on any subject, either inside or outside, and I am continually learning and unlearning.

"To my great horror, I was told by the Sub-Governor yesterday that when lashes were given it was the *bastinado*. I was pleased to arrive eventually at the fact that the lashes were bestowed on the posterior!

"I am seeking how I can better the rebels, but it is a difficult nut to crack, as the ground is not favourable for cavalry, and the friendlies are very few in number. . . .

"I like everybody here as yet, and the climate is nice and warm, but Government House is a 'pigsty in disrepair'; it is in a beastly state, quite unfit for a good Muslim like me!

"I have taken thirty-six cart-loads of bat's-dung out of the area and heaps of rotten rope, etc., of the foulest description—the stench is awful! I am whitewashing all over to kill the plague on the walls. It can at least be made clean."

At first, as had been the case with Gordon (and subsequently with Watson), all went well with Warren in the Sudan:

Watson to his Sister ("*E*").

"CAIRO,
"*February* 14, 1886.

". . . Did I tell you that Sir Charles Warren was stopping with us while in Cairo? I was glad of this as I wanted to tell him many things about the Sudan.

"He seems pretty happy at Suakin, and has begun by taking 300 cattle from Osman Digna's friends.

"Warren is a strong man, and will do something, I expect. . . ."

Very shortly after this letter was written Watson was, however, commissioned by the Egyptian Government to visit Suakin and to report upon the possibility of arranging for the withdrawal of the "English battalion and the Indian force" then retained at that station, by raising the strength of the local forces.

The correspondence began with a letter dated January 16, 1886, to Watson from Sir H. Drummond Wolff, requesting him to call and discuss a "somewhat important telegram from Lord Salisbury about the force for Suakin."

Watson called as required, and about February 10 was commissioned to proceed to Suez to formulate a scheme. He arrived at Suakin about March 15, Warren having, however, left for England before his arrival.

Watson to his Sister ("*E*").

"S.S. GEELONG,
"SUAKIN TO SUEZ,
"*March* 25, 1886.

"I want to tell you a little about my trip to Suakin. . . . I left Suez on the evening of the 12th in a steamer with the fine name of *Euripides*, and arrived

at Suakin on the morning of Tuesday the 16th. She was a cargo-boat, taking stores down for the troops, but they made me very comfortable on board.

"Sir C. Warren had left the evening before for Suez, so we just missed one another. . . . This constant change and uncertainty of what is going to happen is very bad for the country.

"On arriving at Suakin I had a fine reception—nineteen guns fired, and illuminations in the town in the evening. This was on account of my being Chief of the Sudan Department.

"It is rather curious that this appointment in Cairo has, as it were, dropped into my hands of its own accord, although I have never been given it; but apparently people think I have a 'nice taste' in Sudan affairs, and everyone takes me as Chief of the Department. Warren having gone, General Dixon, who commands the troops at Suakin, received me most hospitably, and I lived with him at the Headquarters' Mess, although sleeping and working at the Government House.

"It was strange, being back there again; it really is very little changed since Chippendall and I stayed there together in 1874, with poor Ala-ed-din Bey, who afterwards was killed with Hicks Pasha.

"On the afternoon of the day I arrived I had a reception of all the notables of Suakin. . . . Then, after dinner, I had to ride through the town, to call on all the chief people, and drink coffee and sherbet with them all. Here are the names of some of them:

"Said Osman-el-Morghani.
"Khalifa Saff, the Kadi.
"Shenowi Bey, Chief of Mejlis.
"Khalifa Abdullah.
"Sheikh Hasan, Negib-el-Ashraf.
"Sheikh Osman Ibrahim.
"Mohammad Ahmad, at the Zaptieh.
"Sheikh Ali Murghani.

So that it was past eleven before we got all round!"

Eventually it came about that Watson was offered, and—against the advice, it must be said, of his Cairo

friends—accepted, the appointment, and thus became the successor of his friend Sir Charles Warren, actually taking up his important new work as Governor-General on May 3, 1886.

On this occasion he was accompanied by his younger brother Arthur (afterwards killed at Colenso during the Boer War), who was at this time a Captain in the Egyptian Army, and whom he appointed to be his Military Secretary.

Watson was deeply attached to him, and during the many difficult days that followed he was undoubtedly of the utmost possible service to his elder brother, a fact to which the latter bears the amplest testimony in about a dozen letters, repeatedly remarking that he could not imagine what he would have done without "Arthur's" assistance.

To Sir C. Wilson he wrote, just before leaving Cairo on his return to the south to take up his new duties:

"CAIRO,
"*April* 24, 1886.

". . . Affairs in the Sudan remain unchanged—Abdullah at Omdurman, Wad-en-Nejumi at Berber, El Kheir at Dongola, and Osman Digna at Tamai. Some say that he means to attack Suakin when the English troops are all gone; others that his people are disgusted and will not fight for him any more.*

* In an earlier letter about the Mahdi's plans (dated December 19, 1884), Watson wrote of reports that had reached him from Berber that "the Mahdi intended to entice the English on from Dongola by retreating before them, and even evacuating Berber, so as to draw them on to Metemmeh, near which he proposed to fall on the English with all the men he had, and overwhelm them, another body of Arabs to go towards Dongola to cut off the retreat of the English." Watson adds that the "Arabs intend to spare no one," and that the plan attributed to him was quite possible, as it was the course that "he adopted with poor Hicks and his army."

"As you say, it is a great pity that Warren has left, as he could have done much good there.

"Probably you have heard that I have been appointed to succeed him. It will not be an easy task, but I will do my best.

"Of course, I know already a good many people, and the tribes know something of me, I having been in the Sudan Office now for more than a year and a half."

Wilson's reply to this letter was as follows:

"MOUNTJOY BARRACKS,
"PHŒNIX PARK,
"DUBLIN,
"*July* 20, 1886.

"MY DEAR WATSON,

"Thanks for your interesting letter about Suakin and the tribes round it. I fully realize the difficulties you have had to contend with; I have always felt strongly that the military and political affairs of Suakin should be in the hands of one man.

"Natives do not understand divided rule and action, and I hailed it as a healthy symptom when Warren was sent as Civil and Military Governor, and you succeeded him in the same capacity. . . .

". . . I think you have done an immense deal since you went to Suakin, and am quite sure that if the Cairo people left you alone to work quietly amongst the tribes, you would soon get them to settle down, and wear out the irrepressible Osman Digna!

"I do not know what line the in-coming Government will take, but I fancy they will accept the position in the Sudan, for everyone seems heartily sick of everything connected with it and Egypt. . . .

"I should like to see you in command at Suakin and Chermside, with full powers on the Nile frontier. . . . Best wishes for your continued success."

Out of the flood of congratulations that Watson received in connection with his new appointment, the following two may be selected:

F. R. Wingate to General Watson (appointment to Suakin).

"KESWICK VILLAS,
"ALEXANDRA ROAD,
"COLCHESTER,
"*April* 22, 1886.

". . . I wish you all good luck in carrying out what I imagine to be a very difficult duty, but I certainly think that you have more chance of being successful than anyone else who might have been selected."

Marcopoli Bey to General Watson.]

"SUAKIN,
"*April* 21, 1886.

"It is with the greatest pleasure we heard that your Excellency has been appointed Governor-General of the Red Sea Littoral. I make free to congratulate you heartily, though I might rather congratulate the Government for the step they have taken.

"Such an appointment shows that the ideas of your Excellency have prevailed, and that the Government intend to try the pacification of the Sudan by conciliatory means.

"The Arabs seem to be quite tired with the actual state of affairs, and they expect but the first opportunity offered to them to enter into an agreement with the Government. I hope, then, that your scheme will meet with a satisfactory result, and we are looking after your arrival most anxiously to see you carry it into execution."

It will be convenient to speak first of the historical events that occurred during the brief but all-important term of Watson's Governorship, and to deal separately, in a later chapter, with the questions of general policy inevitably involved.

Watson's own modest summary of his services at Suakin is contained in the third volume of the "His-

tory of the Corps of Royal Engineers" (*op. cit. ante*, p. 58):

"After the withdrawal of the British troops from Suakin in June, 1885, the country in the vicinity of the port remained peaceful for some time, but the districts outside were in the hands of the Dervishes, who tyrannized over the Arab tribes and compelled them to be, at least outwardly, followers of the Mahdi.

"Colonel Chermside, R.E., was succeeded as Governor by Colonel Sir Charles Warren, R.E., who remained a very short time, as he was appointed Chief Commissioner of Police in London, and was succeeded by Major Watson, R.E.

"At this time the Indian Brigade was withdrawn and replaced by Egyptian troops, as the British Government had decided that British soldiers were not to be employed in the Sudan garrisons. But this was a period of comparative peace at Suakin, as the Arab tribes were becoming well disposed to the Government, because they were tired of the war and wanted to return to their former occupation as camel-drivers on the road from Suakin to Berber. But they could not break openly from the tyranny of the Dervishes, and felt keenly the action of the British Government in abandoning them to the tender mercies of Osman Digna and his followers.

"The rebel leader, however, lost much of his influence, and went to Omdurman to complain to the Khalifa of the disloyalty of the tribesmen. Soon after his departure (on July 12) the well-disposed Arabs captured his camp at Tamai (the chief stronghold of the Mahdists) and killed those of his adherents who were left there."

Further details connected with these events are supplied by Watson's own letters written from Suakin, of which the following selection will give some idea of Watson's life at that place, as well as of his general surroundings during this period:

Watson to Mrs. Watson.

"SUAKIN,
"*May* 10, 1886.

". . . After breakfast many natives came in to see me and discuss the chances of peace. I told them all the same thing, that it was useless to talk of peace until Osman was taken and the camp at Tamai broken up. They fully understood this, and said they would write to their friends in the country.

"I also told them that no people coming from the outside would be allowed to remain in Suakin until the war was at an end.

"*May* 13. . . . I am writing this in the bedroom just after sunrise. It is a beautiful morning, and the hills look so clear that you would imagine you could touch them. It is very annoying not to be able to get to them, but, as the Negib-el-Ashraf said the other day, 'Inshaallah! we shall get to Singat for the summer!'

"The Suakinese seem to long for their old summer retreat, which they have not been able to go to for four years. They have written to their friends in the country, telling them what I have said to them. As Marcopoli says, 'we have now sowed the seed: may it bring up good fruit.' . . .

"*May* 15. . . . After breakfast a man called Ali Adam came in from Tamai with letters for us from some of the Sheikhs at Osman Digna's camp, in which they said that they were tired of fighting and wanted peace.

"I explained to them that that was their affair, not mine, and that as they had chosen to rebel they have nothing to complain of; but that I would let Mahmoud Ali go down the coast to a place where they could meet him.

"Captain May kindly agreed to letting him go in the *Condor*, and I will send Brewster* also. It will be interesting to see if the Sheikhs will come; secondly, what will be the result.

* Brewster Bey was afterwards sent by Watson on a peace mission to the tribes, with the most successful results, though, unfortunately, his mission caused a considerable amount of local controversy which need not be reviewed here.

"May is quite eager about it. Two or three more people came in from the enemy in the course of the day, one of them with some cattle, which, as usual, I will sell for him, give him the money, and send him off up the coast.

"They all say that they do not like Osman's plan of inoculating them so that they may get the small-pox, and really one cannot blame them for that. After all the chat came the usual Office work.

"I saw Cameron in the afternoon, and had a long talk with him. He is apt to take a magnified view of small facts, which is probably due to climatic influence. . . .

"I talked so long that I did not get back until 8! But it was rather a good thing, for just as Arthur and I sat down to dinner we heard the whistle of a steamer, and soon the *Muckbir* steamed past the house. I hailed the Captain of the *Jaffarieh*, who, as you know, was on board, and Wylde, and asked them to dinner; and they came in for a few minutes, and gave us a good account of their trip to Rowayeh, which was very satisfactory. Ali Hamid and the other Sheikhs want peace, and to have the salt-works opened.

"The *Muckbir* brought back a ton of excellent salt, so we won't run short of that article for some time!

"The good Amarars have been fighting with the rebels and beaten them twice with some loss.

"There is a rebel of the name of Omar who seems to be a nuisance. I hope to get him, but it is not easy.

"*May* 17.—A Sheikh from Rowayeh came to see me with the usual story about wanting peace, and I gave him the usual reply, that peace depended upon the conduct of him and the rest of his tribe.

"After lunch the *Condor* started for Haddhu, about 10 miles south of here, and took old Mahmud and his sons and Brewster Bey to confer with some of Osman Digna's Sheikhs, who say they are tired of him—and small blame to them!

"There was another Sheikh who ought to have come, but old Osman had doubts about him, and had given him eighty lashes and put him in chains. This is a fanciful way Osman has at present, and it does not seem to increase the number of his friends. . . .

"*May* 18.—The *Garnet* started at 8 and the *Condor* came back at noon, having had a successful interview with the Sheikhs at Haddhu.

"They promise many things, but whether they will perform them remains to be proved!

"*May* 19.—. . . After breakfast some refugees came from Khartum and were sent on to Cairo. They told the old story about the Sudan—misery, famine, and small-pox. The latter seems to be worse this year than it has been for many years.

"It is like a curse upon them for having followed the false prophet, and they confess that.

"*May* 20.—. . . I then had a *mejlis** to discuss the state of affairs up the coast—Mahmud Ali Bey, Saiyid Mohammad-al-Ashraf, etc.—and I decided to send the *Jaffarieh* up the coast to Shinab, and for her to take 200 of the friendlies to land at Sheikh Barghesh, to watch the wells, in case Omar's force comes back.

"I believe Osman Digna has a market at Shinab, which we shall hear more about when the *Jaffarieh* comes back. The *Garnet* will also be at Shinab.

"In the afternoon I went by boat to the left defences, and rode around them with Rundle and Besant, to settle what should be done if the Arabs attacked, and what improvements are required to make the forts stronger.

"*May* 22.—After breakfast I had a parade in the Office of freed slave-girls, to ask them if they wanted to be married to some of our black soldiers who are still unprovided with wives. Twelve stepped forward, and were accordingly sent up to the battalion to choose their husbands. Two of the girls said they would like to be married, but they thought it would be more proper for the soldiers to come and ask them than for them to go to the soldiers.

"*May* 23, *Sunday*.—This morning I sent the s.s. *Muckbir* to Akik, a place about 100 miles south of this, to condense water for the people who live there, as since the rebellion they have been afraid to live upon the mainland, and stop upon an island where there are no wells.

"I sent down in the *Muckbir* Khalifa Saiweh and Osman Sheikh to enter into communication with the

* Reception.

tribes near there, who are writing penitent letters to say that they are very sorry and want to be good in future.

"Whether their sayings are worth anything I do not yet know, but I, of course, only tell them that they are rebels, and will be regarded as such until they have done something to show their good intentions."

"*May* 27.—I had good news this morning from the *Jaffarieh*. She is at Sheikh Barghesh, and the Captain writes to say that he has taken Omar prisoner, the man whom next to Osman Digna we wanted most to get hold of. They have also taken a good deal of cloth and grain from the rebels.

"It seems to have been well managed, as there was no fighting, but I have not had the particulars yet, only a short letter from the Captain, written, as he said, 'to quiet my mind.'

"*July* 8, 1886.—Sunday was the festival of Bairam, the great feast which comes after the fast of Ramadan. I had a reception at Government House, and all the Sheikhs, Khalifas, and notables came in their best clothes, a most picturesque sight—coats of all colours of the rainbow!

"The next day I had to return the calls of the chief people, and had to drink about a dozen cups of coffee, a dozen glasses of sherbet, and smoke a dozen cigarettes before breakfast.

"In the afternoon we generally go out for a sail. The heat, so far, is nothing like what I had expected; we have not had the thermometer much over 100 degrees yet."

"SUAKIN,
"*July* 28, 1886.

"So far the peace policy is getting on well, and Osman Digna is getting rather into the position of a 'sparrow upon the house-top,' for we are surrounding him by means of the Handabs and the Fadlabs and the Beni Amar and the Ashraff and the Abdurrahmanab.

"It is very like the Judges, with the Hivites and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amalakites: here *-ab* corresponds to *-ite!*

"Osman is also taking to his previous Old Testament habit of hewing off heads, if the owners of them happen to annoy him. He thus treated two important Sheikhs last Friday after morning prayers, and cut off their heads in the sight of the congregation. The Arabs are much annoyed at this!"

"CONSTANTINOPLE,
"*October* 12, 1886.

"We are starting for England to-day, going by steamer from this via Athens to Marseilles. We have had a most interesting week here, and seen a great deal. . . .

"We had a pleasant excursion with them (the Simmonses) last week to Brusa in Asia Minor—the old Turkish capital, before they took possession of Constantinople. It is a beautiful place, lying at the foot of Mount Olympus. . . . Another day we went to the Princes Islands, and lunched there with Woods Pasha, who is in the Turkish Navy.

". . . On Thursday last we went up the Bosphorus and lunched with Major Trotter, who is Military Attaché and is now at the Embassy at Therapia. And yesterday we went in a *caique* to the top of the Golden Horn, where a pretty river comes in, called the 'Sweet Waters of Europe.'"

The causes of this sudden departure are discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER X

EGYPTIAN POLITICS AND SUAKIN

(1886)

WE now come to the second heading of the classification which we have proposed for ourselves—viz., the consideration of Watson's policy. The following account of his appointment to Suakin, which sets forth that policy, is taken from a memorandum drawn up by himself: "Before going to Suakin Watson* was requested to give his views upon the position of affairs at Suakin, which he did" in the form of a memorandum which was printed in the Blue Book for Egypt (No. 5, 1886) at p. 61 and the following pages:

"A few days after sending in this memorandum, Watson was himself appointed Governor-General, and he naturally assumed, having no other instructions, that he was to carry out the policy that he had outlined.

"The first duty, however, that he had to carry out was to complete the change of garrison. By May 9 the relief was completed, and the 3,500 Anglo-Indian troops were replaced by about 2,300 of the Egyptian Army.

"At this time Suakin was practically surrounded by dervishes, who lost no opportunity to carry off cattle which might stray beyond the fire of the forts.

"While the relief of the garrison was going on Watson investigated the question of reopening trade and impressed upon the Sheikhs that the Govern-

* This memoir is written by Watson in the third person.

ment was desirous that peace should be re-established, but would take no active steps to put down the rebels.

" He pointed out to them that the present unpleasant state of affairs was caused by the people of the country, and that if the people of the country did not like it, they must put it down themselves. The argument pleased the Sheikhs, who took Omar prisoner and brought him to Suakin, and closed the rebel port at Shinab. Adam Sardun was defeated and killed, and by the end of June the whole country north of Suakin was cleared of dervishes.

" The successful tribesmen assembled at Handub, and at their request Major Watson sent Brewster Bey to meet them.

" They proposed to blockade Osman Digna in Tamai and cut off his supplies, and this blockade was carried out satisfactorily until Osman fled by night, leaving his starving followers at Tamai.

" While these operations were going on inland, Watson opened ports for trade at Rowayah and Sheikh Bargut for the well-disposed tribesmen.

" Matters seemed going on satisfactorily, but at this time Watson, who had worked so hard at pacifying the country, was recalled to Cairo !"

Such was Watson's own account. But, as usual, we have to turn to others to obtain the smallest glimpse of his own share in these history-making events

What he does not say, for instance, is that this strange new peaceableness on the part of the Arabs was largely due to the extraordinary success of his own efforts at pacification—especially, perhaps, his promise that markets should be opened for them as soon as the country was quiet.

General Sir F. Stephenson (quoted by Colonel E. M. Lloyd in his memoir of Watson) openly stated that " much credit was due to [Watson] for utilizing the friendly tribes and encouraging them in their friendly dispositions." And the same high authority states that the fights that took place at this time while

Watson was Governor "materially assisted in undermining Osman Digna's power."

Even on the very day (August 23) before he left for Cairo, for the last time, Watson "called a meeting of Sheikhs and notables to express their views on the pacification of the Eastern Sudan."* Other authorities, as will appear in due course, spoke yet more emphatically of the substantial success of Watson's policy and of his methods of pacification during his all too brief reign over the Red Sea Littoral as Governor-General.

It should, however, be stated that when we refer to Watson's policy or methods, and to the signal success which attended their employment, these methods or policy were not by any means necessarily confined to himself. They were precisely the means employed by all those who, as we now know, formed at this time the more sagacious school of British officials in Egypt, including Warren and Gordon.

Indeed, one of the soundest authorities on Egyptian policy for this period has emphatically endorsed the general principles upon which Watson was now acting. In some brief memoranda which were kindly jotted down for this work, Lord Sydenham (formerly Sir George Sydenham Clarke) wrote that "the points on which we [*i.e.*, himself and Watson] felt strongly in common were—(i.) The opening of the Suakin-Berber route . . . this I was striving for with all my might, and I was delighted to find that our opinions agreed; (ii.) the defence of Sir Charles Wilson, which we both took up in different publications; (iii.) we also shared views as to the proceedings at Suakin and the treatment of the tribes."

Watson's defence of Wilson is elsewhere dealt with, but the first and third of the points mentioned

* Colonel E. M. Lloyd, "Memoir of Colonel Sir C. M. Watson, K.C.M.G., C.B., M.A., R.E."

by Lord Sydenham may be here considered. To us who have seen with our own eyes the extraordinary success which has attended the development of "Port Sudan," and the marvellous transformation that has taken place in the Sudan with continually increasing rapidity ever since the establishment in that once, like Ireland, "distressful" country, of a just and stable government, it must seem strange and even wellnigh incredible that the Nile route could ever have been so stubbornly and successfully defended as the proper route by which to reach the Sudan either for any military or commercial or, indeed, for any other purpose at all.

Yet it was very largely on account of their championship of the Suakin-Berber route—which we now see to have been the only route ever worth even the briefest consideration—that both Warren and Watson exposed themselves to such bitter criticism, though, even if we admit that their efforts were premature, it is none the less clear that events have proved the accuracy of their presage. This battle of the routes was summed up, concisely enough, in a letter that Watson received from Sir Samuel Baker:

"HÔTEL MÉTROPOLE, LONDON,
"*May* 17, 1888.

"MY DEAR WATSON,

"It was kind of you to send me your interesting paper. . . . You and I quite agree, as I have always advocated the Suakin-Nile route, instead of the preposterous journey of 1,400 or 1,500 miles from Khartum to Alexandria.

"Transport must always be in a proportionate rate to mileage, and each break in the journey entails labour, damage, and expense.

"The day will arrive when the Sudan will once more be reopened, but it will never succeed, unless under European administration. . . .

"Sincerely yours,
"SAMUEL BAKER."

An article in the *Edinburgh Review* (vol. clxxv.) of January 1, 1892, contains much valuable and sagacious comment on the difficult question of the treatment of the Sudanese tribes at this crisis, and is particularly illuminating on the question of the Gordon-Warren-Watson policy. After exposing the terrible nature of the evils that had run riot in the Sudan like foul weeds through the prosecution of the "forcible-feeble military"* policy which had hitherto been followed, the writer proceeds:

"On February 8, 1886, Colonel Sir Charles Warren arrived at Suakin. Fresh from South Africa, where he had solved a difficult problem without bloodshed, known as wholly indifferent to the inducements to provoke fighting which too frequently influence smaller men, and possessing a varied experience in dealing with semi-civilized peoples, the new Governor-General was exactly fitted to his post. An immediate change for the better followed,† and Sir C. Warren was rapidly winning the confidence of the people when, unfortunately for the Sudan, he was recalled to London. His successor, Major Watson, in a memorandum of April 6, 1886, had previously indicated the outlines of a rational and humane policy:

> "If the Government were to declare that the war was at an end, and to reopen trade, it is possible that after a time the country would settle down. . . . Had he (Sir C. Warren) remained, he might have succeeded in pacifying the country, as he had begun to inspire con-

* From "The Fate of the Sudan," a review which was printed at p. 232, etc., in the *Edinburgh Review* of January, 1892, and which took the form of expert comment upon two recently published books on the Sudan—(1) "Mahdiism and the Egyptian Sudan," by Major F. R. Wingate; (2) "The Ruin of the Sudan," by Henry Russell and William Gattie, London, 1892.

† The writer notes that one of Sir C. Warren's first acts was to sweep away the ridiculous and panic-begotten regulation under which every native entering Suakin had a sack placed over his head.

siderable confidence. The constant change of Governors has had a bad effect, and tends to prevent a settlement. It is of the utmost importance now that someone should be sent to Suakin with full powers to deal with the question and to reopen trade with the natives."

"Perhaps unfortunately for himself, Major Watson went on to point out that if the policy of reopening trade were adopted, a considerable decrease of the garrison of Suakin could be effected.

"Towards this end he devoted himself, personally interviewing the local Sheikhs, who proceeded to clear out the dervishes from the country north of Suakin, and subsequently to blockade Osman Digna at Tamai.

"Thus, in a short time, the situation was reversed, and Major Watson was even able to send Brewster Bey to Handub, to confer with the Amarar Chiefs. Two ports—Rowaya and Sheikh Barghut*—were opened for trade. All the prospects were hopeful.

"At this moment Major Watson was recalled without reason assigned, and the enquiry which he at once demanded was refused.

"Motives frequently baffle analysis; but in this case they can be brought within narrow limits. Either it was considered desirable that a running sore should be maintained at Suakin for obvious political and commercial reasons, or a section of the military party at Cairo viewed a practicable reduction of the Egyptian Army with disfavour, and regarded Suakin as an available field for its military energies and a possible source of distinctions.

"No other explanations can be suggested for a change of Governors at a time when the whole outlook was peaceful."†

The writer proceeds to speak of the reversal of Major Watson's policy which followed his departure, and

* About 30 miles north of Suakin.

† For a not less clearly considered and statesmanlike summary of the points at issue, see Appendix B—a reprint of an article which appeared in *The Times* of October 9, 1886.

of the long train of calamities which consequently ensued, and which he sums up as being due (p. 264) to an unconciliatory policy, defined, in precise terms, as a " narrow militarism."

In connection with these general political questions, A. B. Wylde, Watson's Agent, and at the same time an authority of almost unrivalled experience of the Sudan, comments significantly in a letter to Watson of April 8, 1888, upon " the wishes of a party in Egypt to reconquer the Sudan for Egypt."

" As long as I live I shall fight against this policy; not that I think it altogether an impossible one if carried out by English officers and black troops and English officials put in charge, but what certainty is there that Englishmen will have the upper hand in Egypt for ever; and it is certain that if we leave and the Egyptians come into possession of a tranquil Sudan, they would immediately lose it again by their maladministration. . . .

" Protect the coast, pacify it with trade, and get those tribes who are at present leading a nomad life to return to their cultivation, and they will settle down, and, with a little help from us, be able to protect their property against any combination that may be brought against them.

" I am sure if affairs were left in the hands of four or five people who know the Sudan fairly well—say, yourself, Brewster, Cameron, Lupton, as soon as he gets away, and myself—that we should have the Sudan quiet in no time and all the tribes willing to do what we asked them, with the exception of the bad characters, Baggaras and Dongola people, who are nearly all slave-dealers. I do not mean the inhabitants of the province, but those who have migrated into it and live anywhere in the Sudan."

From a letter of Wylde to Watson, dated April 30, 1888 (from Chiswick):

" Lord Salisbury is dead against the present policy, and will back us."

From a letter of Wylde's to Watson, dated April 27, 1889:

"Intimately as I am acquainted with the natives of the Eastern Sudan, who for many years have looked upon me as their friend, and have confided in me ever since the troubles commenced in 1883, I have been able to judge from them the effect of the policy pursued by the different Governor-Generals at Suakin, and I must say that your policy, which was the same as Sir C. Warren's, differed materially from that which was carried on after your departure."

It now only remains to consider the circumstances of Watson's resignation of the Governor-Generalship, and in this connection it may be said at once that the writer has no intention whatever of fanning the embers of an ancient and long-forgotten controversy.

He does not believe that any good purpose, or indeed any purpose whatever, is to be served by reopening a discussion which was closed many years since, and all the more so since there is plenty of evidence, apart from this, to prove that (as Warren and others had suggested) Watson was the victim of a local political or politico-military intrigue which was probably a mere repetition or resuscitation of an intrigue that had been carried on against his immediate predecessor in the appointment at Suakin, and the causes of which were not really personal either to Watson or Warren.

It will be sufficient to show that Watson left the court (so to speak) without the smallest stain upon his shield, and that his work had been admittedly in every respect to a signal extent successful.

It must be explained that the Cairo authorities who appointed Watson (no doubt under military pressure) distinctly went back from the first upon their own instructions as to the military command to be given to Watson on his appointment.

After receiving the altered instructions, Watson was naturally anxious to visit Cairo, in order to ascertain what had actually taken place, and as everything was "now perfectly quiet at Suakin" (to use his own words), he formally applied for leave to do so.

In reply, however, he was requested to remain at Suakin, and shortly afterwards received an intimation that his successor had already been appointed.

As he had received no hint that anything of the sort was in contemplation, or been given any chance of stating his case, or, indeed, even been told that there was any case for him to state, this information left Watson no alternative but to resign, and he therefore promptly tendered his resignation to H.H. the Khedive, who replied that he accepted it with regret. Thus terminated Watson's invaluable connection with Suakin.

On reaching Cairo, Watson called on General Stephenson, who expressed himself as "very much pleased with the work done about the peace policy," but "could otherwise give no assistance." He also called on General Campbell, Sir H. D. Wolff, and others, but completely failed to discover the sources of the intrigue, beyond a vague statement that the matter had been "arranged in London."

On this Watson proceeded to England, and reached London on October 22, 1886, where he set about enquiry concerning the copy of his letter, which Sir H. D. Wolff had transmitted to the Foreign Office, and eventually discovered that it was still under consideration at the War Office.

On January 4, 1887, he received from H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge, as Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief, an extract from an Egyptian Army Order (No. 1718 of November 29, 1886), expressing the Khedive's recognition of his (El-lewa) services in the Egyptian Army, and on January 5 he saw the

Duke, Sir George Harman being present. The Duke said to Harman, "What is it all about?" and Harman replied, "The truth is that Major Watson has written a letter to which it is very difficult to reply."

The Duke then asked Watson to tell him the whole story, and when he had finished, remarked that he had been "very badly treated," and that he "must and should have an answer." Watson replied that that was "all that he wanted." If he had done wrong, he "wished to be told what he had done and to be given the opportunity of explaining," but "at present he had been told nothing, and did not therefore know whether it was supposed that he had done something he ought not to have done."

The Duke concluded by saying that he would see to it himself (says Watson), "and that I must and should have a reply."

Meanwhile, on January 15, 1887, ten days after this interview, a letter reached Watson from the Foreign Office, over Lord Salisbury's signature, in which it was stated that "upon the recommendation of the late Earl of Iddesleigh," the Queen had been pleased to approve of his being appointed a "Companion of the most distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, in recognition of services rendered by you in Egypt."*

Having received no answer from the War Office, after waiting about a month, Watson wrote to Sir Lothian Nicholson, Inspector-General of Fortifications, and "pointed out to him how unsatisfactory it was that no answer was sent to my letter, especially after the promise that the Duke of Cambridge had given him."

He added that he looked to him (Sir Lothian), as Head of the Corps, and of course would be guided by

* Watson was invested by the Queen at Windsor Castle on March 14, 1887.

his opinion. A few days later, on hearing from Sir Lothian, Watson went to see him, and once more strongly pressed his claim to be heard.

After much consideration, Sir Lothian replied that " I repeat my advice to you, to drop and forget the whole business as quickly as you can. . . . No one will ever value you the less for what has happened, and everyone who has heard the story has come to the conclusion that you were the victim of an intrigue."

Eventually it was on Sir Lothian's thus reiterated advice that Watson decided not to pursue the matter further.

Sir Lothian Nicholson's opinion certainly agreed with the generally received opinion of Watson's contemporaries and friends. It is unnecessary to labour the point, but the following passage in a letter from (Colonel) Elliott Wood, A.A.G., which bears date January 29, 1891, had exactly the same tenor:

" I think, in spite of your bad treatment, that you may at least have the comfort of knowing how generally it is recognized that you worked unremittingly, unselfishly, and ably for the good of Egypt."

It may be added here that in 1889 an echo of this controversy was momentarily reawakened by a question which arose upon a statement made in a despatch addressed by General Sir F. Grenfell to Sir E. Baring. On May 18, 1889, Watson wrote to his then superior (the Commandant, School of Military Engineering at Chatham), drawing attention to a remark that Major Watson was recalled, " not from political, but from military reasons."

Considerable correspondence followed, Watson again showing, with unanswerable logic and his customary vigour, the utter baselessness of the suggestion, the matter being again carried forward to the Commander-in-Chief, whose decision, communi-

cated to Watson on July 30, 1889, was to the effect that Major Watson should be informed " that nothing has occurred in his military career which will injuriously affect his prospects of future advancement in the service."

Thus happily terminated, with this royally tactful and graceful reply, the whole of this tangled story of the Suakin appointment.

It seems fair to give Kitchener's own story of his appointment, which is contained in a letter that he wrote to Watson from their mutual club in London in August, 1886:

" JUNIOR UNITED SERVICE CLUB,
" LONDON, S.W.,
" *August* 10, 1886.

" MY DEAR WATSON,

" You have probably heard that I am to replace you at Suakin. I am very sorry you should leave, and would never have accepted the billet had my not doing so been of the least service to you.

" The way it came about was—on my arrival at Suez, old West came on board with a telegram stating H.M. Government wanted to know if I would accept Suakin, and if so to wire to Wolff.

" I asked about you, but could find out nothing, and I felt sure you had resigned, so I wired ' Yes,' and went to Alexandria and saw Wolff.

" He then told me, and I said that changed the matter; but he said if I now refused there was another waiting for the post.

" I went up to Cairo and saw General Stephenson, and he told me the same, and that I could do you no good and would do myself much harm by refusing. He also said, what I hope was the case, that he was sure you would see it in the same light.

" I came home and saw the D.A.G. on the subject and Sir R. Thompson, and found out an R.A. officer had accepted, if I refused the billet, and would be appointed at once.

" I hope you think I have done right, and I know you will never doubt how much rather I would like

it if you could remain, supposing you wish to do so. Please write me a line to Cairo. I leave next Tuesday for that place.

" Yours very truly,
" H. H. KITCHENER."

In spite of the extreme delicacy and difficulty of the position in regard to this Sudan appointment, there was no approach whatever to public discussion, still less public dispute, between Watson and Kitchener, such as must have arisen had either of them been a man of lesser calibre.

CHAPTER XI

LATER OFFICIAL WORK IN ENGLAND

(1886-1902)

AFTER proceeding from Suakin to Cairo, Watson, as we have already seen, went home on leave, visiting Greece and Turkey on the way, and never revisited Egypt. He had completed four years' service in the Egyptian Army, and now for the last sixteen years of his service reverted to Corps employment, having received the C.M.G. and Medjidieh for his services in Egypt and his regimental Majority on April 17, 1886.

From the beginning of the year he acted as Major* in charge of the R.E. Training Battalion at Chatham, and in April was reappointed to be O.C. of Balloons at Chatham, in his favourite Balloon Department, to the development of which, as we saw in an earlier chapter, he had long ago rendered most conspicuous services, so much so, indeed, that it may safely be said of him that Watson was one of the chief pioneers of early *military* ballooning in England.

In September, 1882, he was appointed to take up duty at the War Office in connection with the administration of the proposed Barrack Loan, which the Government had decided to raise, and during March and April, 1890, he was employed on a mission to Germany, under War Office instructions, to investigate and report upon the Barrack System of the

* His appointment dated from January, 1886.

German Army, upon which occasion he visited not only Germany, but Austria as well.

The Barracks Act of 1890, which provided for the raising of a loan of four million one hundred thousand pounds for barrack expenditure, on account of the multitudinous details which required attention if its successful administration was to be ensured, cast a formidable burden of extra work upon the staff at R.E. Headquarters, and in March, 1891, Colonel H. Locock was appointed to be a third Deputy-Inspector-General, and Major Watson an additional Assistant-Inspector-General, for the new Barrack Loan Division which was now created.

But the Act itself, which was intended to make good the most serious admitted defects in the existing system, especially in the large camps, was found to require supplementation, and it was consequently followed by the Military Works Acts of 1897, 1899, and 1901, which made provision for the erection of the new buildings required by the increase of the Army, as well as by changes in its distribution.*

Hence the total expenditure for which Watson ultimately became responsible was over six million pounds.

In April, 1896, Colonel Locock was promoted, and Watson succeeded him as Deputy-Inspector-General. This office he continued to hold for the next six years.

Respecting this period General (or, as he then was, Major) Noel Lake, who as Assistant-Inspector of Fortifications served under and shared the same room with him, has most kindly furnished some valuable memoranda throwing light upon the character of Watson's work as "Deputy."

General Lake writes:

* For fuller details see vol. iii. of the "History of the Corps of R.E.'s," which was written by Watson himself, and completed in 1915.

"Our work was the administration of the Barracks Act and the Military Works Loans, involving the handling of an enormous number of papers and the consideration of innumerable questions of finance and details of barrack construction.

"There were from time to time unavoidable changes of policy, due to the ever-varying needs of the Army, but no upsetting and recasting of carefully prepared schemes arising from such changes ever disturbed Colonel Watson's equanimity and serenity of temper.

"He was wonderfully quick in grasping ideas, and had great facility of expression both in speaking and in writing.

"His reports were always extraordinarily clear, and invariably couched in the best and most readable terms, making them more than ordinarily valuable documents.

"He wrote with ease and with great rapidity, and it was very rarely he had to correct or alter minutes or drafts of letters and reports."

General Lake expresses the keenest appreciation of the personal side of his character as a colleague, and regarded him, up to the end of his life, as one of his most valued friends.

By March 20, 1902, Watson, having completed more than twelve years' continuous service at this work, was retired from the Army under the age clause, and received the C.B. on June 26, 1902, on account of his invaluable services to the War Office. He was invested by the late King Edward at Buckingham Palace on October 24 of the same year.

It should be noted that the course of Watson's duties during the period under review led him to visit and inspect not only a number of Barrack Loan Works at home, but also many such establishments abroad, ranging from the British naval stations in the Mediterranean (*e.g.*, at Gibraltar and Malta) to the Cape and Halifax and the West Indies.

It was therefore no idle claim that Watson was enabled to put forward, in his criticism of Arnold-Forster's views, that the subject was "one which he had had considerable opportunity of studying carefully."*

Watson had received his promotion as Lieutenant-Colonel on October 1, 1892, and became Colonel on the corresponding day four years later.

From first to last he remained (as might be anticipated) a staunch supporter of the R.E. Corps, at the meetings of which he frequently took an active part in the proceedings.

For many years he had acted as a member of Council of the R.E. Institute, and not long before his death had been appointed a trustee of the R.E. Widows' and Orphans' Fund.

One of the greatest of his many services to the Corps was his production of a third volume of the well-known "History of the Corps," thus bringing up to date the first two volumes, which had been written by General Whitworth Porter—a most arduous piece of work, not the least valuable part of which consisted of the series of memoirs of past officers of the Corps, amongst whom were Sir J. Lintorn Simmons, Sir John Ardagh, Sir Charles Wilson, and others.

Watson also contributed many important articles to the *R.E. Journal*, notably "The United Artillery and Engineer Officers' School at Berlin," which appeared on August 1, 1890; the article on "Barrack Policy"; and the able reply to Mr. Arnold-Forster, to which allusion has already been made.

Watson's many personal interests were not dropped, but continued, so far as opportunity allowed, in his civil life, and his services to the nation in this regard by no means ceased to be strenuous, in spite of the close of his more active military career.

* *Vide R.E. Journal*, December, 1907, "Barrack Policy," etc.

He repeatedly represented Great Britain at the International Navigation Congresses which were held at this time, and was nominated by the Board of Trade to be the British Government's delegate at the ninth, tenth, and eleventh meetings of the Congress at Düsseldorf in July, 1902; delegate for that at Milan in September, 1905; and again delegate for that at Petrograd (then St. Petersburg), in May, 1908.

With regard to Watson's work for these Congresses, Major Percy MacMahon, of the Board of Trade, the well-known mathematician, has been so good as to furnish some notes, from which the following account of the work at the Düsseldorf Congress is taken, which will serve to show the important and varied nature of the questions with which Watson had to deal on these occasions.

Sir C. Watson's colleague at Düsseldorf was Major-General C. S. Hutchinson, C.B., R.E., and at Milan, Professor L. F. Vernon Harcourt; at Petrograd he was the sole British representative.

The subjects discussed at Düsseldorf were—(1) "Inland Navigation," (2) "Ocean Navigation, as connected with Inland Navigation."

Under the first heading came "the relative advantage of the different methods of meeting the changes of altitude in canals—*i.e.*, locks, vertical elevators, and inclined planes"; the "fixing of rates on inland waterways, as affecting working expenses and interest on capital"; the "depreciation in value of coal and coke due to loading and unloading"; the "construction of dams for the storage of water for navigable waterways"; the "use of electricity for the mechanical traction of boats in canals, and the utilization of water stored in time of flood for the purpose"; the "relative advantages of shallow-draft boats, and the results obtained in these with turbines"; "recent improvements in inland navigation in Germany,

Austria, and Russia"; "the flow of water in large rivers."

Under heading (2) came the "relative advantages and cost of construction of iron and wooden lock-gates"; the "use of sea-going barges and the cost of transhipment from sea-barges into sea-going vessels"; the "construction and working of graving locks"; "dredging apparatus and the automatic removal of harbour bars"; "improvement in light-house apparatus, buoys, and beacons"; "practical experience in the working of the Kiel Canal and the St. Petersburg Ship Canal"; "experiments as to the resistance of ships in open water."

The last subject but one in the list just mentioned is interesting from the point of view of the Great War; it may also be mentioned that the Commission visited the harbour works at Ruhrost and Duisberg, 19 miles below Düsseldorf, as well as the Dortmund-Emden Canal (as part of the system of inland navigation between Westphalia and the German Ocean, at Emden in East Friesland).

On February 6, 1903, Watson was appointed by the Foreign Office to be Secretary to the British Committee for the International Exhibition then about to be held at St. Louis, and on April 23 he was made Secretary to the Royal Commission for the same Exhibition, and paid his first visit of inspection to the Exhibition itself in May.

Having returned to England, he was appointed British Commissioner-General to the Exhibition in August, and paid his second visit to St. Louis in October-November of the same year.

In February, 1904, he paid his third visit, during which he travelled through the Southern and Western States and Canada, returning to England in March, 1905.

General Lake, reference to whom has already been

made, has recorded that he called on Watson at his office shortly after he had been appointed British Commissioner, and could not help being struck by the general air of order and regularity in every branch of Watson's work.

His powers of organization had certainly been well tested, since everything connected with this stupendous task had to be initiated by himself; nothing had been forgotten, and the arrangements made were working as regularly and smoothly as though they had been in existence for years.

The fullest account of Watson's work for this Exhibition has been contributed by Captain A. Longden,* at present of the 100th Siege Battery, B.E.F., who most kindly wrote in the midst of "a regular bombardment" of the line!

"Sir Charles first went to America in 1903 to make the preliminary arrangements and secure a suitable site. . . .

"The determined way in which Sir Charles made up his mind where the pavilion should be placed, and held on to the position, was a very amusing and characteristic episode. Keen business Americans, especially chosen for their sharp manner in transacting business, surrounded him, and wished to cut down the space on every side to an astounding extent.

"Sir Charles, tenacious to the end, asked for a little more, and then a slice in yet another direction, until finally the greatest 'shark' of all completely gave way and remarked: 'D—— it, Colonel! take what you like, and let's get on with the business!'

"After endless Committee and Sub-Committee meetings, Sir Charles arrived in America with his staff, early in 1904, to find acres of mud and so-called "roads" crushed and sunken out of all recognition by

* Mr. Alfred Longden (as he was at the time of the Exhibition) was a lecturer on Art at South Kensington, and had organized the Exhibitions of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society. He was British Representative on Art to the States Exhibition.

the thousands of mules, waggons, and lorries which had passed over them.

"But under Sir Charles's supervision the British gardeners (second to none at such work, except, perhaps, the Japanese) here caused, in a few weeks, a most gorgeous garden to spring up, with a pavilion in its midst—the British headquarters—which was an exact copy in every detail of the orangery in Kensington Gardens.

"Here, again, Sir Charles's thoroughness caused every room to be perfect in its way (Elizabethan, Georgian, and Queen Anne styles). Thus the pavilion came to be the admiration of all visitors. . . .

"System was at the root of all his endeavours, and thus his life was crowned with success. . . .

"His remarkable foresight resulted in the British section (alone of all the nations) being ready in every detail on the opening day, even to the illustrated catalogue. . . .

"Finally, when this vast concourse of nations was at an end, the British pavilion . . . having been so splendidly constructed, the Washington University in St. Louis offered to purchase it for a large sum for conversion into club premises.

"When Sir Charles returned to England he was busily engaged for months in collecting data from the numerous authorities in the many sections under his control (Art, Education, Social Economy, Electricity, Liberal Arts, Manufactures, Mines, Metallurgy, Transportation, Horticulture, Agriculture, Forestry, Fish, Game, Sport, etc.) for the very full Report which he prepared for the Royal Commission. . . .

"Not only exhibitors, but collaborators lodged complaints, because they were not among the 678 successful competitors (!), but hardly a single visitor left Sir Charles's office without a look of satisfaction, as if he had at least got something for his visit, and that something was a kindly smile, a little good advice, a certain something very hard to explain, which filled them with pleasure at having met the man whom a few minutes previously they had visited in order to fight!

"He always opened all letters himself, and thus knew more about the work as a whole than anyone.

" He would never be dictated to, and he (as far as I know), though new at this particular work, never made a mistake !"

It will be clear from the foregoing account that Watson's work in organizing the British Section of the Exhibition, though brilliantly successful, had been extremely onerous, and although the work had been of the kind that he loved, he received no more than his due when he was knighted* on June 30, 1905, in recognition of his distinguished services to the nation as British representative at this Exhibition.

The success of Watson's organization at the St. Louis Exhibition led soon afterwards to work of a similar nature in connection with the Franco-British Exhibition of 1908.

On July 5, 1907, he was elected a member of the Science Committee and also of the Geographical Sub-Committee, which had been appointed with a view to the opening of the Franco-British Exhibition in the following year.

Among Watson's colleagues on the Sub-Committee on this occasion was the famous geographer, Sir Thomas Holdich, who in writing to Watson on the news of his appointment remarked (October, 1907): " I see you have been made a member of the Sub-Committee which deals with the Geographical Section of the Franco-British Exhibition. You are the very man we want;" and proceeded to suggest forthwith that Watson should be convener of the meetings, on the ground that none of the other members had had " anything like your experience in exhibition business."

Apart from his regular official, and also from what may be called his semi-official duties (such as those

* He was created a K.C.M.G. by the late King Edward VII., at Buckingham Palace.

just mentioned), Watson's most important effort to serve his country was undoubtedly the heavy spade-work that he performed in the interests of the National Service idea, of which he was, from the first, a most zealous advocate.

In September, 1894, he was appointed to attend, as British Military Representative, the autumn manœuvres of the Swiss Army, and the experience that he there gained inspired him completely with the idea that the Swiss military system offered by far the best model for the solution of the problem of organizing our own Home Defence Forces.

In April, 1903, he had lectured before the National Service League at the Society of Arts, Admiral Sir N. Bowden-Smith being in the chair on that occasion.

In April, 1909, he revised his lecture, which was published by Messrs. Hugh Rees, Ltd., of Pall Mall, in the following month. This important article contained a reasoned statement of the case for Universal Service, as well as a brief summary of the principal objections to which it was exposed.

In the light of war experience the paper possesses an unexpected interest, since its forecast of the future would appear to have been singularly justified, in respect of its arguments, by the grave course of events that have happened since it was written.*

On the other hand, Watson was far from agreeing with the plan of campaign adopted by the National Service League of that day, although on strictly general principles he had supported the League ever since its foundation. The value of his work on behalf of the general interests of the League was none the less most keenly appreciated and freely

* A note in Watson's own handwriting, attached to a copy of one of his pamphlets, states that it was originally written in Switzerland in September, 1896, and read and published in the revised form (as stated) in 1909.

acknowledged by the committee, as will be seen from the following passage taken from a review of his pamphlet on Universal Service which appeared in the *Nation in Arms* (the organ of the League) in the July issue of the year 1909:

"Among the shorter examinations of the whole question which have come under our notice, we have seen none which we can recommend more unreservedly than this little pamphlet of thirty pages, which anyone will read through in a quarter of an hour. Whoever does so will certainly be unable to plead ignorance of the case for and against compulsory military training, or be any longer confused as to the difference between conscription and universal service. Colonel Sir Charles Watson has written an essay which puts in the simplest and clearest language the advantages of the voluntary system and the arguments against it. He then passes on to an examination of that system of *conscription* which is so often, and, unfortunately, not always unwittingly, confused with universal service. Colonel Watson, like Professor Seeley, in his 'Life and Times of Stein,' hits the nail on the head in showing that 'in reality an army raised by conscription has, though it may appear a paradox to say so, more points in common with one enlisted on the voluntary system than with one dependent on the principle of universal service.' For both under conscription and under the voluntary system the man who bears the burden cast upon him by the well-to-do citizen who escapes the duty of defence and rejoices in the glorious freedom of patriotism by proxy, so far from being looked upon with gratitude and admiration by those who benefit by his misfortune, is often looked down upon as a ne'er-do-well, a failure in civil life, a mercenary character who has sold himself to the highest bidder, and degraded himself by accepting personal service to King and country. As we know, the British soldier has too often been refused admittance to the dignified portals of a public-house and of a music-hall. Similarly, those who live in Belgium and Spain, the only countries where conscription still exists, are aware

of the contempt with which the well-to-do citizen looks down upon the man whom he has *bought* to take his place in the army. How different is it with universal service, where the uniform is the mark of physical efficiency and the voucher of honourable service to the country, whether it be under the monarchy of Germany, the autocracy of Japan, or the democracy of Switzerland. Another point, which the author brings out most clearly, is that just as the system of universal service has the effect of producing a good class of non-commissioned officer, so also does it insure the supply of an excellent quality of officer. When every citizen is bound to serve in the army, if fit to do so, it is natural that many young men of the upper and better educated classes prefer to fulfil their military duty as officers rather than in the lower ranks; and as the number of these is usually greater than there are commissions available, there is considerable competition for appointments, which leads to the selection of the fittest.

" We should like to quote further from this valuable pamphlet; but the fact is that it is so closely reasoned and so packed with common sense that every line carries conviction."

His strenuous advocacy of universal military service would appear to have been inspired by anticipation of the great war with Germany.

At the outbreak of war he observed (August 7, 1914), in a letter addressed to the present writer:

" To me it seems rather curious that people regard the action of Austria and Germany as something new, whereas when we were at Salonica in 1891 people were talking of how soon Austria would fight with Serbia, in order to get hold of the line from Belgrade to Salonica, and for years past Germany has been working at the great military station of Elsenborn, which was to form the base of the march across Belgium to France. . . .

" Our war with Germany was bound to come, and perhaps the present conditions are as good as could be hoped for. But it will be a hard struggle, as it means life or death to Germany."

Yet another problem of national importance to which Watson devoted much labour and research—although in this case his researches led him to take what must perhaps be regarded as the less progressive, if not the less popular view—was the question of introducing the Metric system. It may well have been Watson's professional familiarity with the actual use of weights and measures, coupled with his keen historical sense and the general archæologizing tendency of his mind, that led him to take a more than ordinary interest in that subject. More than one of his papers contributed to the *Quarterly Statement* and other archæological journals dealt with ancient weights and measures, and in 1910 he published through Mr. Murray an excellent and readable little study of a branch of this subject called " British Weights and Measures as described in the Laws of England from Anglo-Saxon Times." The exhaustive enquiry that he had made into this subject had caused him to become an extremely ardent opponent of the Metric system, which he held to be far inferior to the Duodecimal system on which so many British and American weights and measures are based. He certainly made a strong and vigorous stand against the compulsory introduction of the proposed new system. Its defects, indeed, he was an adept in exposing, and a lecture of his on the subject before the Society of Arts in December, 1906, won the award of the Society's Silver Medal in November of the following year.*

In 1911 he contributed to *Whitaker's Almanack* the article which appeared in that year's issue on the subject of weights and measures.

Among the many less prominent public services rendered by Watson to the country may be mentioned

* *Cf.* " Decimal Money," by Colonel Sir C. M. Watson, K.C.M.G., C.B., in *J. R. Soc. Arts*, No. 2902; vol. lvi., of July 3, 1908.

his work on behalf of the British Association for the advancement of Science, and also, perhaps, that on behalf of the London Topographical Society.

With regard to the former, he was chosen to be Vice-President of the Engineering Section of the Association, when it met at Winnipeg in August-September, 1909.

Three years later, at the Dundee meeting in 1912, he was elected President of the Geographical Section, and delivered an important address on that occasion.

In March, 1914, he was invited to become a member of Council of the London Topographical Society. Interest in London's past was, indeed, an abiding passion with him, and "Old London" became in fact one of the regular topics upon which he lectured.

Characteristically, he compiled an extraordinarily elaborate and detailed list of the old city churches, and took a prominent part in the movement to preserve the Church of St. Bartholomew the Great.

The remarkable catholicity of Watson's interest in archæological enquiry is well illustrated by a letter which he wrote in July, 1910, to a friend with regard to the "origin of shot."

This letter, which tells its own story, ran as follows:

"16, WILTON CRESCENT, S.W.,
"*July* 15, 1910.

"DEAR CUMING,

"Do you remember our talk about the history of shot? Did you ever get any forwarder? A friend has just sent me the enclosed list of the *present* standard sizes, but they probably differ somewhat from the old standards.

"Do you know the meaning of the small letters? Was 's.g.' originally short for slug? I could suppose that 'b.' might have stood for buckshot; but if so, what is 'a'?

"There is another point which bears on the question. I presume a 12-bore gun meant a gun for which 12

round lead balls weighed 1 pound. But then one is brought up by the question as to which pound. Was it the troy pound of 12 ounces or the pound of 15 troy ounces by which lead was weighed in the time of King Edward I. or the later pound of 16 troy ounces, or the avoirdupois pound of the time of Queen Elizabeth? It seems probable that the original charge of shot used would have been the same in weight as the original bullet, as the first step would have been to cut them up into slugs.

"The present usual shot charge for a 12-bore gun is $1\frac{1}{8}$ ounces (is it not?), or 492 grains. This looks as if it was originally 480 grains, or 1 *troy* ounce. If this was the weight of the original 12-bore bullet, then, if the latter was cut into eight slugs, a very natural division, they would have weighed on the average 60 grains, which does not differ much (as you will see from the table) from the present weight of one S.9 shot.

"The matter is very interesting, but, so far as I am concerned, wrapped in obscurity."

CHAPTER XII

THE "CALL OF THE EAST"

(1905-1916)

ALTHOUGH Watson had left Egypt in 1885, never to return, there is ample proof that the fortunes of that country, and still more (if possible) those of its great Dependency the Sudan, constantly remained in the forefront of his thoughts, and occupied a place very near to his heart.

It will be sufficient to mention as evidence of the abiding influence upon his mind of this "Call of the East," first, his great desire to return to serve in Africa (this time even though in East Africa); and, secondly, the zeal with which he continued to take part in the discussions of Egyptian policy which were perpetually debated at this time in the public Press. To these we may add, thirdly, the interest and zeal, almost amounting to fanaticism, that he displayed in travel and geographical work of all kinds, but especially in connection with what is known as the Near East, and above all in the Holy Land itself, in which since 1891 his interest became more and more deeply engaged. A fourth piece of evidence was his advocacy of a school of Oriental study.

Of the negotiations which all but resulted in Watson's taking up service in East Africa, the following interesting particulars may be given.

So far was Watson's Governor-Generalship at Suakin from being regarded as a failure that, but a

few months afterwards (in 1888), he was sounded as to his willingness to accept the post of Chief Administrator of the British East African Company's territories on the mainland behind Zanzibar. It was considered that his known friendliness towards natives and capacity for managing them made him specially suitable for this new and difficult work in East Africa. He was himself attracted by the proposal, largely because he thought it could help his favourite project, the opening up of the Sudan, as he had often talked it over with Gordon, who "never lost his interest in that way"—*i.e.*, of opening up that part of the country. But he wrote to Sir R. Murdoch Smith that he had never asked for anything yet, and would not do so now. He was warmly supported, however, by Sir C. Euan Smith, Sir W. Mackinnon, and Mr. George Mackenzie — Lord Wolseley had no objection to *lending* him for the purpose—and he would undoubtedly have been appointed, had he been prepared to accept the conditions.

We have already given some of the proofs of Watson's skilful handling of questions of Egyptian (and Sudanese) policy, but one special phase of such discussions—viz., the defence of his friends against attack—may be illustrated here as calling forth all his feelings of personal loyalty.

There is certainly no doubt that the Bayard-like task of championing any or every friend in difficulties was peculiarly acceptable to his chivalrous nature, especially when—as too often happened on those occasions—an attempt was made to traduce men like Gordon and Sir Charles Wilson, who had only, in Sir Henry Lawrence's simple but effective phrase (a favourite expression of Watson's), "tried to do their duty."

The most brilliant examples of Watson's intrepid

tourneying in such matters are supplied by the battles that he fought on behalf of Gordon's memory (and incidentally for the promotion of Gordon's officers and the honouring of his notes* after the fall of Khartum), for his great friend Sir Charles Wilson during the attempts that were made to fasten upon him the responsibility for the failure of the Gordon Relief Expedition, and for the Sudan itself and its inhabitants in general, on all and sundry occasions.

During the attempt to make a scapegoat of Wilson, Watson fearlessly challenged all comers in support of his friend, and succeeded in unhorsing in succession each assailant who crossed spears with him, for to his many other talents he added that of being a most doughty and formidable controversialist.

In an article written for the *R.E. Journal* in May, 1908,† he remarked, after stating the evidence in a masterly summary of the real position, that

" all the evidence available proves quite conclusively that the town [Khartum] was taken, not for want of soldiers or of ammunition, nor by treachery, as some people tried to make out, but for the simple reason that the garrison and inhabitants were absolutely starved, and the soldiers were unable to make any resistance. . . . The last issue of rations was made about January 4. . . .

" Soon all that had been collected in the Commissariat was finished, and then the inhabitants and the soldiers had to eat dogs, donkeys, skins of animals, gum, and palm-fibre, and famine prevailed.

" The soldiers stood on the fortifications like pieces of wood. The civilians were even worse off . . . corpses filled the streets; no one even had energy to bury them.

* It may seem incredible that Gordon's notes, issued in Khartum, should ever have been dishonoured by the Government when they were presented for payment, but there is, unfortunately, proof that such was the case.

† " Lord Cromer and Sir Charles Wilson," by Colonel Sir C. M. Watson, K.C.M.G., C.B., late R.E.

"Yet Gordon made the place hold out for three weeks longer!

". . . It would have made no difference if the steamers had left Gubat three days earlier; Khartum would have fallen three days sooner, that is all. The game was played out before the British troops reached Gubat, and after January 20 nothing could have saved the town.

"The Expedition failed because it started too late, and took too long on the road to Gubat."

It would hardly pay to argue with an antagonist who could demolish his opponents with a simple recital of such facts as these.

We have now to deal with Watson's work as a geographer, which included many valuable contributions to that science.

He was a member of the Royal Geographical Society for more than thirty years, having been elected a Fellow in 1875. In June, 1893, and again in May, 1912, he was elected as a member of the Society's Council. In November, 1894, he delivered a valuable address on the work of the Palestine Exploration Fund before the Manchester Geographical Society in the Memorial Hall at Manchester.

In July, 1908, he attended the International Geographical Congress at Geneva, on behalf of the Palestine Exploration Fund.

In September, 1912, came the Dundee meeting of the British Association, at which Watson (who, as already stated, had been elected President of the Geographical Section) gave a very important address on the subject of Eastern Exploration.

In November he was elected an honorary corresponding member of the Geographical Society of Geneva.

In 1913 he visited Belgium, and was elected an honorary member of the Royal Geographical Society

of Antwerp, before whom he read one of his most useful papers on the work of the Palestine Exploration Fund.

It has already been stated that Watson was an inveterate traveller, and, apart from his service in Egypt and the Sudan, and his official visits of inspection to military stations at home and abroad, had travelled extensively in almost every country of Europe, as well as in Turkey and Palestine, Canada and the United States.

It is characteristic that in connection with these most extensive journeys, with their annual recurrence, he kept a most complete and methodical record of his expenses, showing to a penny the cost of his travels, in every country through which he passed.

General Lake has recorded that during his annual holiday, which was regularly spent in travel, he indulged in one of his favourite hobbies—photography.

"He was in this, as in all other things, careful, methodical, and successful, and his camera was instrumental in providing innumerable illustrations of his many journeys about the world."

Before leaving the subject of Watson's travels it will perhaps not be out of place to quote the answer made by Watson to a charge (made by one of his friends) that in the course of his travels he had not devoted to his own country the attention that it deserved. His reply ran as follows:

"16, WILTON CRESCENT, S.W.,
"*June* 20, 1913.

"I was rather amused at your criticism that I had neglected the United Kingdom in my wanderings, because it is really not founded on fact.

"Independently of private travelling in these little Islands, of which I have done a good deal, there

were three epochs when duty necessitated it—(1) When I was A.D.C. to Simmons and had to go about with him on inspection; (2) when I was in the War Office, and visited nearly every barrack in Great Britain and Ireland; and (3) in connection with the St. Louis Exhibition, when I had a good deal of travelling in the manufacturing districts. . . .

"As you say, I have had, and have, a very interesting life, but, as you know, the world is a very interesting place, if you keep your eyes open. It rather annoys me when I hear men who have retired from the Army complain that they have nothing to do. There is plenty for everyone to do, if they would only do it!"

We have now reached Watson's chief personal interest* outside the circle of subjects more or less directly connected with his actual work, which undoubtedly centred in the operations of the Palestine Exploration Fund, the Executive Committee of which he was invited to join in July, 1890.

In 1891 he paid his first visit to Palestine, where he spent the greater part of three months, from February to April.

Five years later he became Chairman of the Fund, in succession to his great and intimate friend Sir Charles Wilson, and he was still holding that office when he died.

In 1915, when Watson had just completed his tenth year of work as Chairman, there occurred the fiftieth anniversary of the Fund's entrance upon its operations in the Holy Land.

To celebrate this occasion he prepared a "Record of the Surveys, Excavations, and Researches" for which the Fund had been responsible, and this "Record," Watson's most important contribution

* Mr. J. D. Crace, in a letter dated June 8, 1916, after a warm tribute to the work accomplished by Watson in aid of the Fund, remarks that his general "relation to the Palestine Exploration Fund has been that of one who made it his chief or only interest."

to the Society's output,* was published under the title of " Fifty Years' Work in the Holy Land: a Record and a Summary," in which he incorporated, with extensive revisions and supplementations, Sir Walter Besant's " Thirty Years' Work in the Holy Land,"† which Besant had compiled during his Secretaryship of the Fund, ten years before Watson became Chairman.

This revised account, which, fitly enough, crowned Watson's successful work for the Fund, was completed by him in 1915, but a few months before his death.

The importance, significance, and interest of the work accomplished by the Fund during the period for which Watson acted as its Chairman will be seen from the account of his tenure of that office which appeared in the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* in May, 1916, over the signature of Professor L.W. King—himself a member of the Executive Council —who remarks that from 1905 (when Watson became Chairman of the Executive Committee) until his death he

" took a leading part in organizing British excavation in Palestine.

" The Fund had already conducted excavations at Tel Jezer, the site of the Canaanite city of Gezar, which was still a strong fortress in Maccabean times and continued to be a place of importance after the occupation of Palestine by the Crusaders.

* For Watson's book on " Jerusalem " (published in Dent's " Medieval Towns " Series) *vide infra*, p. 219.

† This " Thirty Years' Record," by Sir W. Besant, was itself an enlargement of his earlier " Twenty-one Years' Work in the Holy Land," which was written in 1886. The chief additions in Watson's " Fifty Years' " volume, as compiled from Sir W. Besant's " Thirty Years' Record," included " Further Explorations at Jerusalem "; " Excavations on Tel-el-Jezar " (the modern Jezer) and other " Tels " or " Mounds "; " Excavations at Beth-Shemesh "; " Survey of Southern Palestine "; and the well-known " Palestine Pilgrims' Texts."

" . . . The most interesting find . . . was an early Canaanite castle, built long anterior to the Hebrew occupation, probably at the time of the first colonization of the country by the Western Semites; it was furnished with a remarkable rock-tunnel leading by a flight of steps to an underground spring which served as the citadel's water-supply.

" The success of the Fund's work upon this site, and the monumental publication of the results, owed much to its Chairman's energy and enthusiasm. A further important excavation was made in 1911-12 in another South Palestinian mound, Ain Shems, the site of Beth Shemesh, a city successively occupied by Canaanites, Philistines, and Hebrews.

" Here the pottery of the Philistine stratum proved of exceptional interest, for it was found to bear a strong resemblance to Ægean fabrics, and supported the view that the Philistines were a people who had come from oversea. It is gratifying to recall that Sir Charles Watson lived to see the completion of the Fund's great survey of Palestine.

" The Southern Section, up to the Egyptian border, was brought to a successful conclusion shortly before the War, and though the maps, for obvious reasons, have not yet been published, the archæological results were issued as the annual volume for 1914-15."

Mr. J. D. Crace, F.S.A., Hon. Secretary of the Fund, has been good enough to supply the following notes with regard to Watson's work for that Society:

" Sir Charles Watson was elected Chairman in 1906, and from the first gave the closest attention to the affairs of the Society, both generally and in detail.

" As time went on, this attention increased, and he made himself acquainted with an extensive Palestine literature and became a constant consulter of the Society's Library, his linguistic knowledge proving of great service. He closely studied personally the many topographical problems; was always ready to discuss them impartially and dispassionately; and during his later visits to Palestine always looked into the arguments on the spot.

"Probably no one who survives him has so good a knowledge of many of these questions—certainly I know none who could listen so patiently to a contrary opinion.

"In many respects he was (as he has been called) an ideal Chairman. In manner kindly and cordial, he combined the simplicity and modesty of an English officer with the fine courtesy of a real Irish gentleman; he always gave an adversary credit for sincerity.

"Needless to say that his love of *order* and *method* were apparent in all his office work, and soon affected all who worked under him.

"What has always been a mystery to me was his ability to put aside all other interests for the one in hand. The amount of reading and labour which he devoted to the Palestine Exploration Fund would have sufficed to fill the time of any ordinary man.

"It was here, probably, that his orderly and methodical habit of mind, aided by a clear memory, enabled him to maintain a keen and vivid interest in works quite distinct from one another. Subjects in which mathematics and mensuration were concerned always attracted him.

"Topography, especially its historical side, whether of Jerusalem or of Old London, found in him a keen student.

"When Sir Charles Watson became Chairman it was in succession to the friend whose 'Life' he wrote, General Sir Charles W. Wilson, who made the first survey of Jerusalem before the actual foundation of the Society.

"The Executive Committee has therefore had the advantage of the guidance for a considerable term of years of men whose expert knowledge has been equalled by their modesty and personal courtesy."

To sum up Watson's connection with the Fund, his indefatigable zeal in its championship was of inestimable service, and his death in 1916 was the calamity described in the *Quarterly Statement*.

"During the last ten years" (says this account) "his able guidance, his wide knowledge, and his

personal charm, have been invaluable to the Society, and endeared him to all those who in any way shared his work or were brought into frequent contact with him."

Inseparably linked with the work of the Fund was his study of the archæology of the Holy City, in which he took a keen and abiding interest. His "Story of Jerusalem," which appeared in Messrs. Dent's "Medieval Towns" Series, was published in 1912.

In writing of this book the *Athenæum* reviewer remarked* that

"It would be difficult to name a more competent writer for the subject.

"As Chairman of the P. E. Fund he is perfectly acquainted with the progress of archæology in the Holy Land, where brother-officers of his Corps, such as General Sir Charles Warren, the late Sir Charles Wilson, and Colonel Conder, not to mention Lord Kitchener, have worked with signal success.

"In writing Wilson's biography and revising his article on Jerusalem in the recent edition of the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' Sir C. Watson had occasion to go thoroughly into the many acute controversial points with which the classification of sites fairly bristles.

"He has carefully studied the great work of Dr. George Adam Smith, the publications of the Palestine Pilgrims' Texts Society, and the *Quarterly Statements* of the Palestine Fund, and read the chief books of travellers from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth, such as Sandys, Maundsell, R. Pocock, Chateaubriand, and Robinson. . . . [He] makes one 'visualize' the little twin villages on the western and eastern hills, a thousand years and more before Jerusalem is mentioned in writings, and see the primitive city of David, built probably of wood, little more than a chief's camp, with few civil inhabitants. He traces its growth and its many overthrows, and one marvels at its amazing power of recuperation after repeated destruction.

* No. 4,408 (April 20, 1912).

"Had Jerusalem not enjoyed the unique privilege of being a Holy City for three great religions, it could never have rivalled the fabulous phœnix in its resurrections. . . . We specially commend the admirable plan of Jerusalem appended to the work . . . the index is excellent."

The reference made by the reviewer to Watson's article in the eleventh edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica" in the foregoing passage might well have included Watson's article on the Holy Sepulchre, in addition to his revision of Sir C. Wilson's article on the Holy City itself.

A twin interest which was very intimately connected with Watson's study of the Holy City was the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, of which he became a Knight of Grace in April, 1892.

In June, 1906, he was appointed member of the Council of the Order, and three years later became Vice-Chairman of Committee of the British Ophthalmic Hospital of St. John; in 1912 he was elected Chairman.

Our last proof of the influence that the "call of the East" exercised upon Watson is founded upon his many years' advocacy of the cause of Oriental scholarship. His services to this cause, though focussed, to some extent, on the work of the Palestine Fund, were by no means narrowly confined to it. For Watson was an excellent linguist, and had in particular—as will have appeared from his Egyptian services—a knowledge of Arabic, in the colloquial use of which he was especially proficient.

It was no doubt this personal experience of the vital importance of such colloquial knowledge that led him, so far back as September 20, 1887, to address to Sir F. Abel, as Secretary of the Imperial Institute, his proposals* for establishing a "School of Oriental

* *Vide* letter printed *in extenso* at end of this book.

Languages" as a Branch of the Institute. These proposals, which were among the most far-sighted of his many sagacious forecasts, after a prolonged incubation of nearly thirty years, have at last taken shape in the School of Oriental Studies, which was opened by His Majesty King George, accompanied by Her Majesty the Queen and the Princess Mary, on February 23, 1917.*

In his letter of September, 1887, Watson described what had been done in the way of founding similar institutions on the Continent—in Paris, in Vienna, and in Berlin.

Of the last-mentioned school, which was then on the eve of being opened, he somewhat significantly observed that "It would appear from the comments in the German Press that it is hoped the school will prove of great assistance to German merchants, in enabling them to outdo English rivals in the Eastern trade." Whereas, "although England has greater interests in the East than any other European country, yet for some unexplained reason she is the most behindhand in encouraging the study of modern Oriental languages."

It is obvious that Watson builded better than even he knew, and that the roots of the imperious necessity which has, though late, called the School of Oriental Studies into being, strike far deeper now than when this passage was penned. Watson's proposals obtained staunch support from his friend Sir Charles Wilson (who wrote, in the spring of 1888, that he "fully agreed with every word of the letter"), from Professor Rhys Davids (representing the R.A.S.), from Sir F. Abel (the Director of the Imperial Institute), from Lord Stanley, from Professor Max Müller, (who wrote that Watson's paper "contained the

* A full account of the proceedings is printed in the first number of the *Bulletin* of the school.

whole subject *in nuce*"), from Mr. Charles Wells (the translator to the Foreign Office), and from many other distinguished scholars. Yet the upshot was at first disappointing, the only real progress made for many years consisting in the founding of the Scholarships for Oriental Languages at the Imperial Institute.

From such small beginnings has arisen, after many years, the School for Oriental Studies, which has its home in the old buildings of "The London Institution" in Finsbury Circus, now considerably enlarged.

"Of Sir Charles and Lady Watson's unbounded hospitality" (writes General Noel Lake) "all those who had the joy of knowing them could speak with enthusiasm. The Sunday and Thursday 'afternoons' when Lady Watson was usually 'at Home' were most enjoyable meetings, and Sir Charles, unlike the vast majority of London men, was almost invariably present, setting an excellent example, which it is a pity is not more widely followed.

"Sir Charles and Lady Watson, with their wide knowledge of men and things, gathered from extensive reading and from travels in almost every part of the world, made a charming host and hostess; they could, moreover, always gather around them a large circle of clever and interesting friends, so that one never left their hospitable roof without feeling better and wiser for the visit."

Everyone who enjoyed the privilege of attending Lady Watson's "Thursdays" and many delightful little dinners in Thurloe Square, or 16, Wilton Crescent, will gratefully concur in General Lake's words.

Watson's last illness came suddenly—he was only ill three days, with bronchitis—he was fully occupied up to the end of his life, and the end came as he would himself have chosen, while he was still full of work and energy.

He died of heart failure on March 15, 1916.

In Watson there passed away one of the most

notable of our Imperial pioneers—one who, as has been said, never refused any work that came to his hand, and never asked for favours; a man of such versatility that he always succeeded in the tasks that he undertook, and never botched or bungled them; a man with a sane, clean, manly and hopeful outlook on life, whose only contempt was for weakness of character, and who under an exceptionally quiet and restrained exterior concealed that elemental fire without which no man's nature can be transmuted into tried gold.

He was indeed, as has been well said of him, a born rebel, but the forces against which his soul revolted were those of disorder and disobedience, of injustice and oppression, of tyranny in all its many forms, of privileged and patronaged self-righteousness in high places.

Here was, as all who knew him will admit, a man of iron principle, of the highest integrity, of the keenest insight and foresight.

APPENDIX A

THE following letter to Sir C. Wilson contains the most complete and at the same time the most concentrated account of Watson's work at Suakin:

"SUAKIN,
"*June* 14, 1886.

"MY DEAR SIR CHARLES,

"I was very glad to get your letter of May 24. Thanks for your congratulations on my being sent here. I am sure no one knows better than you the difficulties of the work. The Arabs are so puzzled with the constant changes of policy and movements of officials that they find it hard to know what to believe. The principal instruction I received on coming down here was to see what could be done in the way of restoring peace and reopening trade. At the same time as my arrival, the Anglo-Indian garrison was relieved by Egyptian troops. As regards these it was ordered that no active operations of any kind were to be undertaken at Suakin, so that practically they were only a guard for the town, and had no value as a factor in any negotiation in the country.

"When I came here the general situation was as follows:

"Suakin was held by a garrison strong enough to hold it against any attack, but the influence of which did not extend more than a mile or two from the outer forts. Indeed, even at that distance a small party would have run a considerable risk of being cut off

by the rebel pickets which surrounded the town, just keeping out of range, and occasionally exchanging shots with the cavalry patrols.

" Osman Digna was at Tamai, with Sheikh Taher, and others of his principal adherents. The force with him was variously estimated at from 1,000 to 3,000, but it was believed to be suffering severely from small-pox.

" Osman had built a fort, and had mounted upon it the brass mountain guns which he had brought from Kassala. The influence he exerted through the country was very considerable, although many of the Arabs had ceased to believe in Mahdism and were tired of the tyranny with which Osman treated them. He constantly plundered them of what they possessed, ostensibly ' for the good cause,' and cut off the heads of any that displeased him. The number in chains was considerable.

" At Nashum, 8 miles to the west of Suakin, was the Emir Mohammed Adam Sardoun, with a large force, who had the duty of watching Suakin and supplying the pickets. Handoub was also occupied by the rebels.

" The principal centre of rebel influence to the north was at Shenab, a harbour a little to the north of Rowayah, where was Osman's principal market, under the charge of the Emir Omar. Stores were brought to this place from the Arabian coast, and then sent to Osman Digna by camel.

" A certain amount of trade had come to Tamai from the south, but for some reason Osman, in place of encouraging it, had plundered the caravans. On one occasion, when a caravan of seventy camels arrived, he killed the camels, took the goods, and put the men in chains, saying that ' it was the time to fight the Holy War, and not to think of buying and selling.'

" Another caravan is also reported to have been

plundered, with the exception of certain goods which belonged to Hasan Moussa-el-Akad, who, as you know, was exiled to Massowah, where he exercises the calling of a merchant and is supposed to be Osman Digna's agent. We shall hear more of him, as I have just got an order that he is to be transferred from Massowah to Suakin. He will need careful treatment.

" So far as I was able to make out, there was very little connection between this east coast rebellion and the Rowofan rebellion. Osman Digna utilized the latter for his own purposes, but now that the Mahdi is dead, the bond of religious fanaticism is breaking down, and there appeared no reason why the Eastern Sudan revolt should not be extinguished independently of that in the Nile Valley.

" Osman occasionally reports that he has received letters from Khalif Abdullah at Omdurman, who is going to send him reinforcements, but the latter never arrive.

" Immediately on arriving here I began talking to the chief people of Suakin and pointing out to them the disadvantage of the present state of things, and the comfort it would be to themselves if peace was restored and trade reopened.

" They all agreed that this was perfectly true, and said that not only they, but a large proportion of the people outside were most anxious to finish the war and return to peace, but that the difficulty was to know how to do it, unless the Government would help them. I told them that the Government would help neither in men nor money, that the tribes had got up the war, and the tribes must put it down; but that, if they did so, and restored the country to peace, the Government would consider the advisability of taking off the blockade and allowing trade, and that new ports would be opened, probably at Rowayah and Akik, for the convenience of the tribes north and south of Suakin.

"A good many letters were written, and soon answers began to come in. The gist of them was that the tribes were tired of the war, and would be only too glad to have peace; that the tyranny of Osman was far greater than any tyranny the Government had ever shown. They were much pleased at the promise that trade would be reopened.

"Osman Digna, knowing that the feeling of the tribes was turning against him, sent an army to the north against the Amarars and another to the south against the Ashraffs and Beni Amer; but both his armies were held in check, and were worsted in some skirmishes that took place. . . . On May 20 the situation was somewhat like this:

"Having got news which led me to believe that we might get hold of the Emir Omar near Shenab, I sent the steamer *Jaffarieh* there with some 200 friendly Arabs on board to Rowayah. They heard that Omar was at Yanina, a place about 7 miles inland. Thanks to the good arrangements of Captain Abderrahman Kami, of the *Jaffarieh*, and the help of the Amarars near Rowayah, the capture of Omar and his followers was satisfactorily effected without any fighting. A considerable quantity of grain and cloth was also taken.

"As it was reported that the rebel force which was in front of the Amarars was falling back south, I thought it very probable that an attack would be made upon Sheikh Bayhub, and I had therefore ordered the *Jaffarieh* to stop there on his way back from Rowayah, and to protect the Amarars who were there. After waiting two days, a rebel force under the command of Mohammed Madani, a nephew of Osman, moved upon Sheikh Bayhub and attacked with a good deal of vigour, but they met with more than they expected, and were repulsed, leaving their leader and forty-six others dead on the ground; the remainder dispersed. Our people lost one man killed and four slightly wounded.

" The remainder of the rebel northern force either dispersed or returned to Tamai.

" As the Amarars had shown such good feeling, I opened a market at Sheikh Bayhub, where they could get grain and cloth, and sell their cattle to Suakin merchants.

" Osman, annoyed, apparently, by the repulse of his men, sent Mohammed Adam Sardoun, his best General, with a considerable force against the Amarars, but this met with no better success. Sardoun's army dispersed, and he himself was killed, with some others. The result of this was that the whole country north of Suakin was cleared of rebels, and single men could travel safely from here to Rowayah. I am rather doubtful about the Bishareen, but have sent a good man who is connected by family with some of the important Sheikhs to discuss matters with them and with the Kilab, a rather important tribe in the vicinity of Elba. It may be advisable later on to open a port for the Bishareen near Elba, but this must depend to a certain extent upon the course of events upon the Nile.

" The Amarars have occupied Otao, on the Berber road, and it is reported that the road is quiet as far as Obak. Beyond that it is, of course, in the hands of the rebels, but it is believed that there are not many people now at Berber.

" The force which Osman sent south did not fare better than his northern army. In place of attacking the Ashraff and Beni Amer, its advance was opposed by these tribes, and the rebels seem to have melted away. I have sent two of the chief people of Suakin to Akik, and they have recently returned. They have brought letters from many of the Sheikhs, and report that the country is quiet and practically free from Osman's influence south of Tokar.

" Practically, at present, Osman's power is limited to the country in the vicinity of Tamai. Of course,

it would not do to trust too much that this will last—the Arabs have shown themselves so changeable on previous occasions—but it is good as far as it goes.

"Several people came from Kassala this morning. They report all quiet there now; the town and fort have been destroyed. The Kordofan insurrection against Abdullah goes on steadily.

"Wad-el-Kerim, the chief of the Shukeniyeh tribe, is at Omdurman. His grandson, Abu Homara, has been here, and started yesterday for the Shukeniyeh country. If he can, he will go to Khartum to see Wad-el-Kerim, and of course I have given him instructions to look after the papers which were lost in the Abbas with poor Stewart. Shall we ever get them?"

"*June* 18.

"Since writing the above, we have made further progress. I had sent the *Jaffarieh* to Rowayah to make a station near the salt-fields, which have been abandoned for the last two years, but which are going to be reopened. The Captain had orders to encourage the Khibab Amarars to clear out the few rebels who were still at Shenab.

"This they did in a very satisfactory manner. They took a considerable quantity of cloth and grain and completely dispersed the rebels—one good result is that a number of the Bishareen Sheikhs have sent to ask for peace. If I can get them to join the peace party it will be a good point gained. Shenab was taken on the 14th. On the 16th Osman Digna sent Aly Sherai—who had taken Adam Sardoun's place—to the Dibout Valley between Hashum and Otao. They were met by some of the Amarars, who are in occupation of the latter place, who routed them and carried off all their cattle, thus making another score for the peace party.

"I fear you will find this a long letter, but I think you like to hear of what is going on. . . .

" . . . My wife is here with me, and we are very comfortably established in Government House. Perhaps some women would think it was rather roughing it, but she does not mind, though of course it is very different from being in Cairo.

" I have already started getting information about the tribes, and am making a sort of comparative vocabulary of the Beni Amer Hadendoa and Amarar dialects. The Suakin dialect seems to be almost exactly the same as Hadendoa. It is not easy to get at any tradition of the origin of the tribes, but most people appear to agree that the Hadendoa were in the country a very long time before the Beni Amer or Amarar. Perhaps if the war was once over and the people had settled down, I might be able to get at more information; you may be sure I will not forget it. So far the weather has not been at all as hot as I expected, and it has been very dry. I hold out to the good folk of Suakin, as a very strong reason for re-establishment of peace, that we may get up to Sinkat for the summer, which they seem to look upon as a sort of Paradise. They have not been there for three years now, and long for a sight of it again. Judging from what they say, it must be a very nice place, and the nights are very cool.

" Yours very sincerely,

" C. M. WATSON."

APPENDIX B

SUAKIN POLICY

(Extract from "The Times" of October 9, 1886.)

Letter from "The Times" Egyptian Correspondent.

"As I have already advised you by telegraph, Watson Pasha has resigned the Governorship of the Red Sea Littoral and returned to Cairo. His period of command has been a short but not uneventful one, and we have recently heard so little from the Soudan that a reference to that not altogether pleasing subject may perhaps be tolerated. The history of Watson Pasha's Governorship may be considered, too, as of special interest, for in the whole of that vast region known as the Soudan there is a general similarity of conditions, and the Eastern littoral is the one portion in which an attempt has been latterly made under English direction to carry out the policy consistently advocated by *The Times*.

"We have been told *ad nauseam* that in meddling with the Sudan we were attempting a colossal and utterly impossible task. Mr. Blunt has prayed us to desist from attempting to combat a reform of Islam. Mukhtar Pacha has proved to his own satisfaction that the work can only be accomplished by Moslems. The late Hobart Pasha warned us that we were interfering with that sacred mummy the integrity of the Turkish Empire; while Mr. Gladstone at one time proclaimed it beyond the sphere of our operations, and at another preached the sacred duty of slaughtering a people rightly struggling to be free.

" Let us see what has been the result of a policy dictated, not by the infallible authority of the *vox populi*, as determined by the votes in the House of Commons, but by the simple common sense of a young English officer of Engineers with local experience.

" Early in May of the current year the garrison of Suakin consisted of about 3,000 men, of which, roughly speaking, one-third were English and two-thirds Indian. Outside the walls of Suakin the whole country was ruled by the dervishes; beyond the fortifications it was impossible to stir, and Osman Digna at Tamai made raids for cattle under our very guns. Watson Pasha arrived as Governor-General on May 3, the evacuation by British troops was completed on the 9th, and in their places was a garrison of 2,300 Egyptian troops, including about one-third blacks. The smaller garrison rendered necessary greater concentration, and the camps at Graham's Point and Sikh Redoubt were given up. Osmân Digna, with two or three thousand men, was at Tamai in a fort mounted with guns from Kassala. His Emir, Mohammed Sardoun, was at Hashin, eight miles distant, with a considerable force. His duty was apparently to blockade the town and to pick off any of the garrison who might give them the chance. At Shinab, to the north, was another body of rebels, who kept open communication with the sea-coast and enabled Digna to get his supplies.

" The attitude which General Watson adopted from the first, and consistently maintained, may be briefly summarized thus: The hostilities had been tedious and troublesome to both sides, more particularly to the Soudanese. Nobody seemed to have gained much advantage from them but a few unscrupulous men who were apparently acting from selfish motives. The Government was anxious that they should cease, but not sufficiently interested to

take any active measures to obtain that result either in the way of men or money. The Soudanese had made the existing situation; it was the Soudanese who must put an end to it. If they thought the existing state of things satisfactory, let them continue—the Government would regret it, but not otherwise be interested; if, on the other hand, the Soudanese agreed with the Government that the movement was continued for the advantage of an unscrupulous few, they would do well to suppress it, and the moment tranquillity was restored in any district markets would be opened at convenient places and trade allowed in the district.

"The careful yet unostentatious circulation of this style of argument was well calculated to effect its object. More educated men than Soudanese are not unfrequently rendered more eager to adopt a measure which is recommended with indifference rather than with proselytizing zeal. The most consummate tact could have devised no better arguments than those which the circumstances forced on Watson Pasha, but of which he availed himself with excellent judgment. Delivered not as an official exposition of policy, but as a matter of course in ordinary conversation with all whom he came in contact, the idea spread with much greater rapidity than if it had been solemnly promulgated as a Government circular, too well known to contain empty words only. Very shortly the Governor was asked whether he would permit the passing of letters advocating the advantages of peace. This, too, was at once granted, with the dry remark that they might write what they liked, but it would be no use to write about peace unless they did something to obtain it. Letters went to the Amarars, the Beni Amers, Garribs, Handabs, and a few others. Soon a few and then more Arabs came dropping in from outside, hoping to be allowed to remain. The Governor made a point of seeing

them, explained his anxiety that circumstances should permit their remaining, regretted that in the absence of peace it was impossible, and sent them away by sea, landing them either north or south of Suakin as they preferred. Much may be done in the East with what Italians call *la buona maniera*. Probably each of these tourists got back home after his little sea voyage with a different impression of the Egyptian Government under an English Governor to that which he had previously. Certainly, it soon became evident that the state of feeling among the tribes was steadily improving, and that a large section were in favour of peace and the opening of trade. Perhaps the most certain sign of the good effect was that Osman Digna began to get angry, and ordered Mohammed Sardoun to divide his forces, to send a portion to the north to chastise the Amarars, and another to the south to punish the Beni Amers and Ashraffs. But Osman Digna had calculated without his host; the Amarars showed front and checked the one army, while the other, finding the southern tribes arrayed against them, seem to have lost heart before any fighting commenced, and to have made a strategic movement into the mountains.

" And now commenced an active correspondence—if such a term can be applied to letters coming from one side only. The head Sheikh of the Habab tribe and his brother wrote to say that they were collecting a force near Teklai, and intended to fight the rebels. Hamad Kantabai, who had been coquetting with the Italians at Massowah, wrote to express his devotion to the Egyptian Government. Several Sheikhs who were with Osman Digna at Tamai wrote to say that they and nearly all the others wanted peace, and asked if they might be allowed to see Mahmoud Ali Bey to negotiate with him.

" Mahmoud Ali Bey, accompanied by Brewster Bey, was sent in the *Condor* to the point on the coast nearest Tamai. Here the Sheikhs came on board.

They said they were unable to leave Osman, as he had their families and their cattle in his power, but they hoped to be able to take him prisoner, and they asked if there was still a reward to be got for his head. Brewster Bey replied that no reward would be paid for his head, but a good one if he were brought alive into Suakin. The Sheikhs left, promising to do all they could for peace. Meanwhile the Governor thought that something might be done in the north. Mahmoud Ali and 200 Amarars were therefore despatched in an Egyptian vessel to Digna's port, Shinab. On arrival at Rowaya they heard that the Emir Omer was at Yamina, about six miles inland. The Amarars landed, and, assisted by the neighbouring tribe, surrounded Omer, and carried off without a blow both him and a large quantity of cloth and grain.

"This successful raid encouraged another. It will be remembered that Digna's northern force had been checked by the Amarars, and was thought likely to attack Baghut. Mahmoud Ali's 200 men were therefore landed, flushed with their recent success, to protect the natives. The Emir Mohammed Madani, a nephew of Osman, marched against them, fired a volley, killed one of the friendlies, upon which the Amarars charged with such vigour that they routed the enemy, killing the Emir and forty-six others, after which the entire northern force disappeared and returned to their homes. Osman Digna, however, made a last effort, as usual, by proxy, and ordered Mohammed Sardoun, his most capable Emir, to collect all his men and crush the Amarars. A battle took place in some not very well-defined locality, Sardoun was killed, the force collapsed, and the whole country north of Suakin was cleared of rebels. And now, having done something, the Amarars claimed and received their reward. By June 2 a thousand of various tribes assembled at Baghut. A market was opened, and the Suakin merchants were allowed to

open trade there. On June 8 a similar favour was granted to the village of Salloom, between Baghut and Handoub. Communication between Suakin and the north had become easy, and a single man could ride through the country without danger. At Rowaya a small post was established, and the salt-works, closed for two years, were reopened.

"This much had been accomplished within little more than a month of Watson Pasha's arrival. On June 22 Brewster Bey was sent to Handoub to discuss the situation with the Sheikhs at their own request. It was arranged that the Amarars should gradually move towards Tamai, and endeavour to alienate Digna's supporters. This they did promptly, and the next night were attacked by a force which they succeeded in repulsing, killing thirty-two men, with a loss of two on their own side. Three days later they moved from Hashin to Suakin, and encamped under the fortifications. From thence they sent parties at night to fire into Osman's camp, with the result that the enemy were completely cleared from the vicinity of the town. In the beginning of July they agreed to make a move in the direction of Tamai—the mounted camelry were sent by land, the others by two Egyptian steamers to Haddhu. At Terrowi they came up with the enemy, pursued them nearly to Tamai, and returned in the evening to Suakin with a few prisoners, 160 camels, and 200 sheep and cattle.

"On the 11th the Amarars made what is styled a reconnaissance in the direction of Tamai, a strategical term which would appear to imply firing into the town. The Hamdab tribe were next reported to have entered the field, and, concentrating in the vicinity of Sinkat, proposed to attack a body of Osman Digna's followers there. The number of people coming in from Tamai increased daily; but as this district was still unpacified, the majority were deported as previously explained. On July 19 the

Amarars again moved to Handoub, and a caravan with goods and money sent by Osman Digna to Berber was captured. The Suakin-Berber road is, in fact, reported open to Jebel Kokreb, while the arrival is reported at Massowah of 800 camel laden with gum.

" The Amarars and other friendly tribes continued to close in on Tamai and to intercept supplies, the English and Egyptian cruisers watched the coast to prevent importations from Jeddah, and Osman Digna began to find himself very much like a rat in a hole, so, summoning his few remaining followers, he informed them of two very important facts—first, that 4,000 men were marching from Khartum to the relief of Tamai; and, secondly, that, summoned by Khalifa Abdallah to Khartum, he was starting off to meet them. On August 13, accompanied by a faithful few, he decamped.

" Nothing shows more distinctly the collapse of the movement throughout the Sudan than the fact that even the hardy imagination of Osman could not venture to promise more than 4,000 men. A year or two ago he could truthfully boast of his actual 10,000 present, and his imagination at its feeblest would have spoken of 40,000 in the distance. But even Digna's inventive faculty is limited by what he deems the credulity of his supporters. They may believe in 4,000, but the days are past when he could expect them to believe in larger figures. It must be admitted that even the reduced figure does not seem to have been easily digestible, for up to the latest advices deserters come in daily, and the rebellion of the Eastern Sudan will, with continued good management, soon become a memory of the past.

" And how has this been accomplished ? Not by waste of English blood or treasure, not by indiscriminate slaughter of the righteous champions of freedom, but by allowing the blameless Ethiopian to settle

his quarrels in his own way, and by the moral influence of common sense. No English or Egyptian soldier has been employed, the native tribes have been offered, not peace or war, but plenty or starvation at their own choice. There has been attached no humiliating condition, no inhuman penalty, unless it is one to refuse to barbarians the means whereby alone they can continue their internecine slaughter. The result is that which was foretold in your columns: the natural trading instinct—which is but the instinct of a wish to live—has risen superior to the fanatical instinct, which is but the instinct to kill.

"So ends my bare record of facts. The lesson which it teaches is, I think, this, that the Sudan difficulty, like others, disappears if it is faced with a union of decision, common sense, and tact. We must abandon both the sentimental policy of Exeter Hall and the blood and iron policy which follows as the natural reaction. We must adopt as our motto, neither 'Rescue and Retire,' 'Slaughter and Scuttle,' nor any other of those phrases, the sole attraction of which appears to lie in alliteration. We must recognize that the Sudanese, like other men, have 'a good deal of human nature about them,' and if they are incapable of that high sense of honour, that logical consistency of action, and that disinterestedness of motive, which has characterized all our dealings with the Sudan, they have a very keen sense of their own interest and rudimentary ideas as to the blessings of trade.

"Above all things, let it be borne in mind that any continuous policy is better than any number of continually shifting ones; and seeing that in the East a policy is certain to be identified with the man who executes it, and that personal influence counts for much, a frequent change in the person of administrators is earnestly to be deprecated, except in case of utmost need."

APPENDIX C

From Major C. M. Watson, R.E., to His Excellency Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, G.C.M.G.

" ALEXANDRIA,
" *September* 13, 1886.

" SIR,

" In compliance with your wish, I have the honour to bring to your notice the following facts with reference to my recent position as Governor-General of the Red Sea Littoral.

" The first intimation which I received that there was any intention of selecting me for the appointment was in a telegram that I received on April 8 last from General Grenfell, who was then at Assouan, in which he said: ' I have been asked whether I could spare and recommend you for command, Suakin; would you like it ?' To this I replied on April 9: ' Would be quite ready to go at once to Suakin in command under certain conditions.'

" On the same day (April 9) I received a letter from General Sir F. Stephenson, in which he said: ' How would it suit you to be Civil Governor of Suakin, with an officer, English, of Egyptian Army to command the troops ?'

" I called upon Sir F. Stephenson and thanked him, but pointed out that I was quite sure that, under present circumstances at Suakin, difficulties would be certain to arise, unless the Governor-General had direct military command of the troops, and I begged him to excuse my accepting the appointment.

"On April 10 I heard again from General Stephenson, who said: 'Will you call upon Sir H. Wolff at 9.30 to-morrow morning, and talk over with him the requirements of a Governor of Suakin, Civil and Military?' I accordingly called upon your Excellency, and, after some conversation, you asked me if I would be willing to take the civil and military commands at Suakin. I said that, although not anxious to go to Suakin, I was quite prepared to do so if the civil and military commands were united.

"Your Excellency informed me that I had been selected because I had a knowledge of Sudan affairs, and already held high military rank in the Egyptian Army. You also said that you would telegraph to Her Majesty's Government, and would recommend that I should receive a salary of £2,000 per annum.

"Three days afterwards Sir F. Stephenson asked me to write him a formal letter of acceptance, which I did in the following terms: 'I have the honour to inform you that I am prepared to accept the appointment of Governor-General of the Red Sea Littoral, with military command of the troops, and am ready to start as soon as required.' I also telegraphed as follows to General Grenfell, who was still up the Nile: 'General Stephenson and Sir H. Wolff have asked if I would be willing to go to Suakin in command. I have replied that I am quite willing if I have full civil and military authority.' It is perfectly clear, therefore, that I accepted the appointment on the most distinct understanding that I was to have full civil and military command.

"My appointment as Governor-General of the Red Sea Littoral was approved by Her Majesty's Government, and was officially made by Khedivial Decree of April 17. On April 27 the following order appeared in English Cairo General Orders:

"'HEADQUARTERS, CAIRO,
"'*April* 27, 1886.

"'No. 1. H.H. the Khedive having been pleased to appoint Watson Pasha, R.E., Egyptian Army, Governor-General of the Red Sea Littoral, Watson Pasha will, on the departure of Brigadier-General Hodding for India, assume command of the Garrison, and charge of the Defence of Suakin, reporting to the General Officer Commanding in Egypt the date of his being so.

"'By order,
"'(Signed) F. L. CAMPBELL,
"'*Lt.-Col. A.A.G.*'

"The above was the only written order I received before leaving Cairo, whence I started for Suakin on April 28. Sir F. Stephenson had written to ask me to start without waiting for my instructions, in order that I might have a few days with General Hodding before he left Suakin."

On reaching Suakin, Watson discovered that there was a conflict between the instructions issued to him by the Egyptian War Office and those given by the then Sirdar. This conflict, which had, of course, nothing to do with Watson, was the cause of infinite trouble, and in the end the orders of the Sirdar prevailed, which were not those under which Watson had accepted the appointment. The result was that Watson was requested to hand over the military command of the troops to the Commandant, a 'dual control' which, as he had predicted from the first, would be certain to produce friction. Still, Watson acted as required, and handed over command of the troops on June 8. He remarks subsequently in the same letter:

"The peace negotiations advanced very satisfactorily, and I was enabled by degrees to draw away a number of the Arab tribes from the rebels. Markets were opened at Mersa Sheikh Barghut and Mohammed Ghul, and the salt-fields at Rowayah were again worked, after having been closed for two years in consequence of the rebellion. The country in the vicinity of Suakin became more and more peaceful. As a proof of this I might mention that, whereas four months previously it was impossible for anyone to go outside Suakin without danger, a single man now carried the weekly post from Suakin to Rowayah, a distance of 130 miles.

"I wrote a considerable number of reports to the Egyptian Government, but received no replies, and was accordingly uncertain whether the policy of gradually opening up trade and restoring the country to peace was approved of. . . .

"I have the honour to remain,

"Your Excellency's obedient servant,

"(Signed) C. M. WATSON,

"*Major, R.E., Pasha Egyptian Army.*"

Sir H. Drummond Wolff to Major Watson, R.E.

"ALEXANDRIA,

"*September* 19, 1886.

"SIR,

"I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 13th instant, which I have not failed to transmit to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your most obedient and humble servant,

"(Signed) H. DRUMMOND WOLFF.

"HIS EXCELLENCY WATSON PASHA."

APPENDIX D

PROPOSAL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SCHOOL OF MODERN ORIENTAL LANGUAGES

" BROMPTON BARRACKS,
" CHATHAM,
" *September* 20, 1887.

" SIR,

" I have the honour to request that you will be so good as to lay before the Organizing Committee of the Imperial Institute the following proposition for the establishment of a School of Modern Oriental Languages, as a branch of the Institute.

" Although England has greater interests in the East than any other European country, yet, for some unexplained reason, she is the most behindhand in encouraging the study of Modern Oriental Languages. In fact, there is at the present time no public institution where instruction is given in these languages.

" Of course, I am well aware that there are Professors of Oriental Languages at various Universities, but the education given by them is rather in the literary and more ancient forms than in the spoken and written dialects now used in the East.

" I have discussed the question with several members of the Royal Asiatic Society, and with others who are interested in the subject, and have met with a general consensus of opinion as to the great desirability of establishing such a school.

" At Paris and Vienna, Schools of Modern Oriental Languages have been in existence for many years,

and one is now being established by the German Government at Berlin.

" Full particulars with regard to the Paris school will be found in a paper which I wrote for the Royal Asiatic Society, published in the nineteenth volume of the *Journal* of that Society. This school was founded nearly one hundred years ago, in consequence of a report presented by Lakanal to the National Assembly in the year 1795, in which it was pointed out that, although the ancient and literary languages of the East were the objects of much consideration, yet no arrangements were made for teaching the modern languages, although the latter were of far greater importance, both for commercial and political purposes.

" The school, as at present constituted, is given by the French Government a large building, rent free, and a grant of £6,145 per annum.

" Gratuitous instruction is given in the following languages:

Literary Arabic.	Modern Greek.	Chinese.
Modern Arabic.	Armenian.	Japanese.
Persian.	Hindustani.	Malay.
Turkish.	Tamil.	Javanese.
Russian.		

" But notwithstanding the excellence of the institution as it now exists, it would appear from the following paragraph, taken from *The Times* newspaper of the 7th inst., that it is proposed to give a still further development to the school, in order that it may be of more use for commercial purposes:

> " ' *French Merchants and Oriental Languages.*— The French Minister of Public Instruction has addressed a letter to the Minister of Trade and Industry announcing an arrangement which he has made for rendering the School of Living Oriental Languages in Paris useful to com-

merce. It was, he says, the intention of the founders of the school that it should serve the interests of science, politics, and commerce; it has published many works of great value to science, and has trained dragomans and interpreters for service in Oriental countries, but hitherto it has prepared none of its students for commercial careers. The present is a time when this should be corrected. The school teaches Chinese, Japanese, Annamese, Malay, Javanese, Tamil, Hindustani, Persian, Turkish, Russian, and the Slav dialects, modern Greek, Armenian, and Arabic. In the more important subjects natives are employed to enable the students to acquire a practical knowledge of the language in question, and, indeed, the decree extending the school in 1869 dwelt especially on the essentially practical nature of the establishment. The Minister of Public Instruction has accordingly decided to form a commercial section in the school. No degree will be required for admission; the pupils in this section will for the first year pursue the same course of study as those who are qualifying for a degree from the school, but from the second year their training will be specialized, and will embrace commercial correspondence, contracts, decisions of commercial tribunals, weights, measures, coinage, the agricultural and commercial productions of various Oriental countries, etc. At the termination of the course certificates will be given to students who have pursued it successfully. The Minister proposes to publish compilations useful for this course in the various languages, and requests that his project be brought to the notice of the various Chambers of Commerce, with a view to obtaining suggestions and support from them.'

Oriental School in Vienna.

"The Oriental Academy in Vienna is of world-wide celebrity, and the instruction given there has greatly assisted the development of Austrian commerce. The course of instruction includes European as well as Eastern languages, as the following list of languages now taught will show:

Arabic.	Hungarian.
Persian.	Servian.
Turkish.	English.
Russian.	French.
Modern Greek.	Italian.

"Lectures are also given in commercial and political law and cognate subjects.

Oriental School in Berlin.

"The School of Oriental Languages in Berlin is now in course of formation, and by a law passed on May 23 of the present year the German Government undertakes to pay half the cost of its maintenance up to 36,000 marks (£1,773) per annum, and to contribute 20,000 marks (£985) to its foundation. Judging from the speech of the Minister, Von Gossler, in introducing the Bill, it is clear that living Oriental languages only will be taught, more especially those which will be of use for commercial purposes.

"The following languages are those in which courses will commence when the school opens on October 16:

Arabic.	Turkish.	Persian.
Hindustani.	Chinese.	Japanese.
Swaheli, Herero }	African languages.	

"It would appear from the comments in the German Press that it is hoped that the school will prove of

great assistance to German merchants in enabling them to out-do English rivals in the Eastern trade.

"It is, of course, of great importance that England should keep on a level with other nations in everything that affects her commerce, and I am quite sure that the establishment of a School of Modern Oriental Languages in connection with the Imperial Institute might prove of inestimable advantage, and would be entirely in accordance with the objects for which the Institute has been founded.

"It would be for consideration whether the Government might not be asked to contribute towards the expenses of the school, as is done in all other countries.

"The Secretary of State for War has already shown his appreciation of the necessity for the study of languages among the officers of the Army, by offering prizes of £200 to those who attain a certain standard of proficiency in Arabic, Turkish, and Russian; at the same time the War Office affords no help in the study of these languages, but would most probably do so if a suitable institution could be set on foot.

"The Foreign Office also, which now keeps up a school for student interpreters at Constantinople, might be willing to contribute to the expense, as, of course, it would be far better if those who were sent to study as student interpreters at Constantinople had received some preliminary instructions in Oriental languages before leaving England.

"Judging from my conversation with members of the Council of the Royal Asiatic Society, I have little doubt that this body would co-operate with the Imperial Institute in the matter.

"If this proposal should meet with favourable consideration, it would probably be advisable that a small committee should be formed to take evidence as to what has been done in this direction in other countries, and to report to the Organizing Committee of the Imperial Institute. I have collected a certain

amount of information on the subject, and would be very pleased to place it at their disposal.

"I have endeavoured to be as brief as possible, and have therefore avoided entering into details as regards the organization of the proposed school, but I shall be glad to make a further communication on the subject.

"I have the honour to remain,
"Your obedient servant,
"C. M. WATSON,
"*Major, R.E.*

"TO SIR FREDERICK ABEL, F.R.S.,
"*Secretary, Imperial Institute.*"

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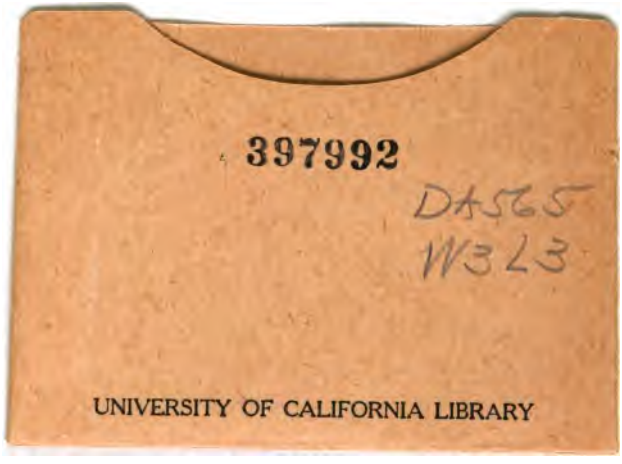
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